Friendſhip in Death:

D12640-M.36

IN

TWENTY LETTERS

FROM THE

DEAD to the LIVING.

To which are added,

LETTERS Moral and Entertaining,
in PROSE and VERSE:

In THREE PARTS.

By Mrs. ELIZABETH ROWE.

To which is prefix'd,

An Account of the AUTHOR's LIFE.

EDINBURGH:
Printed for WILLIAM GRAY, and ſold by him and other Bookſellers.

M,DCC,LV.

1755

L. B. Tuttle
No 11 Hanover St.

THE

LIFE

OF

Mrs. ELIZABETH ROWE.

Nec tua, præter te, chartis intexere quiſquam
Facta queat, dictis ut non majora ſuperſint.

TIBULL.

MRS. ELIZABETH ROWE, not more admired for her fine writings by the ingenious that did not know her, than eſteemed and loved by all her acquaintance, for the many amiable qualities of her heart, was born at *Ilcheſter* in *Somerſetſhire*, *Sept.* 11. 1674. being the eldeſt of three daughters of Mr. *Walter Singer*, a gentleman of a good family, and Mrs. *Elizabeth Portnell*, both of them perſons of very great worth and piety. Mr. *Singer* was not a *native* of the town now-mentioned, nor an *inhabitant*, before his impriſonment there for his non-conformity in the reign of King *Charles* II. Mrs. *Portnell* thinking herſelf obliged to viſit thoſe that ſuffered for the ſake of a good conſcience, as a teſtimony of her regard, not to them only, but alſo to our *common* Lord, agreeably to the repreſentation he himſelf makes of ſuch kind and chriſtian offices: It was from hence that acquaintance firſt commenced between theſe two virtuous and well-pair'd minds, which afterwards proceeded to a union that death alone could diſſolve. And this it did too ſoon for the mournful ſurvivor, if the tendereſt affection might be judge, and for the world, which can badly bear to loſe any, and much more ſuch eminent examples of virtue and religion in the ſeveral ſcenes and relations of life. 'Till her death Mr. *Singer* reſided at *Ilcheſter*, but not long after removed into the

neighbourhood of *Frome* in the ſame county, where he became ſo well known and diſtinguiſh'd for his good ſenſe, primitive integrity, ſimplicity of manners, uncommon prudence, activity and faithfulneſs in diſcharging the duties of his ſtation, inflexible adherence to his principles, and at the ſame time truly catholic ſpirit, as to be held in high eſteem, even by perſons of ſuperior rank: My Lord *Weymouth*, who was reckoned a very good judge of men, not only writing to him, but honouring him with his viſits; as did the devout Biſhop *Kenn* very frequently, ſometimes once a week: ſuch a charm is there in unaffected goodneſs, and ſo naturally do kindred ſouls, warmed and actuated by the ſame heavenly paſſion, and purſuing the ſame glorious end, run and mingle together with the greateſt pleaſure, after they are once acquainted, notwithſtanding any accidental diverſity of ſentiments in ſome ſmaller things!

Mr. *Singer* was religiouſly inclined, as he ſaid himſelf, when about ten years old, and never from that time neglected prayer; and, as far as he knew his own heart, had ſincerely endeavoured to keep a good conſcience; and he died as he had lived, *April* 18. 1719. full of that bleſſed calm and peace of mind, and humble confidence in the mercy of God, through a Redeemer, which a long courſe of active virtue, and conſtant lively devotion, joined with the moſt generous and exalted ideas of the divine goodneſs, free from all mixtures of a gloomy, ſullen ſuperſtition, may be expected to produce. A worthy and intimate friend of his, and witneſs to the heroic and chriſtian manner in which he finiſhed life, obſerves, that he ſettled his affairs, and took leave of the world with the ſame freedom and compoſure, as if he had been ſetting out on a journey; was peculiarly careful that the widows and orphans, with whoſe concerns he was intruſted, might not be injured after he was gone; converſed, tho' under great bodily diſorders, with thoſe that came to ſee him, who were not a few, in the eaſieſt, freeſt manner; ſpent his time in praiſing and bleſſing God, and praying to him, and giving good counſel to thoſe about him; ſhewed an uncommon ſweetneſs and patience in his behaviour; and was exceeding thankful

thankful to thoſe who did the leaſt thing for him, tho' they owed him a great deal more. In a memorandum relating to her father's laſt ſickneſs and death, Mrs. *Rowe* herſelf hath theſe words, *My father often felt his pulſe, and complain'd that 'twas ſtill regular, and ſmil'd at every ſymptom of approaching death: He would be often crying out, Come Lord Jeſus, come quickly; Come, ye holy angels, that rejoice at the converſion of a ſinner, come and conduct my ſoul to the ſkies, ye propitious ſpirits; and then would add, But thy time, Lord, not mine, is beſt.* If I may uſe the expreſſion, how lovely and tempting is ſuch a death! What an inſtance of the power of religion, and the true dignity of human nature, when raiſed and ſupported by the grace of God, and the hope of immortality! The ſight was ſo affecting, that a perſon liſted among the *free-thinkers* of the age, as they are pleas'd to compliment themſelves, being preſent, was exceedingly ſtruck with it, and ready to ſay, *Almoſt thou perſuadeſt me to be a Chriſtian*; as every one who rightly conſiders ſuch examples, and how naturally they ariſe out of the principles of the goſpel, firmly believed, and ſteadily practiſed upon, muſt be intirely perſuaded by them; perſuaded to embrace it, not merely as a pleaſing imagination, but a moſt ſacred truth, which all that allow it to be the former, have reaſon to wiſh it may prove; and which no man that wiſhes it to be true, ſo far as to examine the evidences of it with candor and ſincerity, can pronounce to be falſe.

THOSE who were acquainted with Mrs. *Rowe* in her childiſh years, could not but have obſerved a great many things not common in that age of life, which promiſed the bright day that afterwards enſued; and it muſt have been with peculiar ſatisfaction that Mr. *Singer*, in whom parental affection conſpir'd with a penetrating diſcernment to heighten the pleaſure, beheld the early dawnings of a great and good mind in his charming daughter.

WHEN ſhe received the firſt ſerious impreſſions of religion, does not appear; not unlikely it might be as ſoon as ſhe was capable of it, at once perceiving her obligation to the Author of her being; and, in the ſame meaſure as her opening reaſon diſcovered theſe to her, feeling the force of them. A Lady of character

for good ſenſe and piety, who began her life with her, thinks ſo; and in one of her pious addreſſes ſhe herſelf thus ſpeaks to God: * "My infant-hands were early "lifted up to thee, and I ſoon learned to know and ac- "knowledge the God of my fathers." To this, with a prudent and pious education, the felicity of her natural diſpoſition under the heavenly influence, conſpired; for tho' ſhe had an unuſual ſprightlineſs in her temper, which held out to the laſt, yet ſhe was at the ſame time bleſt with a turn of mind to noble and elevated ſubjects, that gave her a high reliſh for the pleaſures of devotion.

THERE is ſo great a ſimilitude between painting and poetry, as being each of them a pleaſing and judicious imitation of nature, and depending upon the beauty and ſtrength of the imagination, that 'tis no way ſurpriſing, one who poſſeſſed this faculty in ſo high a degree of perfection did very early diſcover an inclination to theſe two ſiſter arts; which have often the ſame followers, perhaps always, the ſame admirers: it having been, I believe, ſeldom known that thoſe who have excelled in one of theſe arts, have not, at leaſt, had a taſte for the charms of the other, and been qualified to judge of its beauties, whether they have made any attempts in it or no.

SHE lov'd the pencil when ſhe had hardly ſtrength and ſteadineſs of hand ſufficient to guide it; and in her infancy (one may almoſt venture to ſay ſo) would ſqueeze out the juices of herbs to ſerve her inſtead of colours. Mr. *Singer* perceiving her fondneſs for this art, was at the expence of a maſter to inſtruct her in it; and it never ceaſed to be her amuſement at times, and a very innocent one it was, 'till her death. Perhaps (ſaith an ingenious gentleman, who knew her perfectly well) ſhe liked it the better for the opportunities it yielded her of pleaſuring her friends with preſents of the beſt of her drawings, and therein gratifying her beneficent diſpoſition; for ſhe kept very few of them herſelf, and theſe only ſuch as ſhe judged unworthy the acceptance of any one elſe.

SHE

* *Devout Exerciſes*, p. 36.

SHE was alſo, what every one acquainted with her writings will ſuppoſe of ſuch a well-tun'd ſoul, very much delighted with muſic; chiefly of the grave and ſolemn kind, as beſt ſuited to the grandeur of her ſentiments, and the ſublimity of her devotion.

BUT her ſtrongeſt bent was to poetry and writing. Poetry indeed was her favourite employment, in youth her moſt diſtinguiſhing excellence. So prevalent was her genius this way, that her very proſe hath all the charms of verſe, without the fetters; the ſame fire and elevation, the ſame bright images, bold figures, rich and flowing diction. She could hardly write a familiar letter but it bore the ſtamp of the poet. One of her acquaintance remembers to have heard her ſay, She began to write verſes at twelve years old, which was almoſt as ſoon as ſhe could write at all. In the year 1696, the 22d of her age, a collection of her poems on various occaſions was publiſhed at the deſire of two of her friends, which we may ſuppoſe did not contain all that ſhe had by her, ſince the ingenious prefacer gives the reader to hope that the author might in a little while be prevailed with to oblige the world with a ſecond part, no way inferior to the former.

THE occaſion of her poetical name, *Philomela*, which from this time ſhe was known by to the world, and whether ſhe aſſumed it herſelf, or was complimented with it by her friends, I have not been able to learn. The latter is moſt probable, and that it was given her at the publication of her poems, before which her modeſty not conſenting that her own name ſhould appear, this was ſubſtituted in the room of it, as bearing a very eaſy alluſion to it, and happily expreſſing the ſoftneſs and harmony of her verſes, not leſs ſoothing and melodious than the ſtrains of the nightingale, when from ſome leafy ſhade ſhe fills the woods with her melancholy plaints.

THO' many of theſe poems are of the religious kind, and all of them conſiſtent with the ſtricteſt regard to the rules of virtue; yet ſome things in them gave her no little uneaſineſs in advanced life. To a mind that had ſo intirely ſubdued its paſſions, or devoted them to the honour of its Maker, and indued with the tendereſt moral

ſenſe,

ſenſe, what ſhe could not abſolutely approve, appeared unpardonable; and, not ſatisfied to have done nothing that injured the ſacred cure of virtue, ſhe was diſpleaſed with herſelf for having writ any thing that did not directly promote it. How were it to be wiſhed, that none of our celebrated poets had any thing worſe to anſwer for, than the harmleſs gayeties of a youthful muſe, for which too they had atoned by more ſerious and inſtructive compoſitions; or, that after all the guilt they had contracted, by corrupting the manners of the age with their looſe productions, they were conſcious but of half the remorſe the virtuous *Philomela* felt, for what no ingenuous reader will impute as a reproach to her memory.

WHAT firſt introduced her into the notice of the noble family at *Longleate*, was a little copy of verſes of her's, with which they were ſo highly delighted, as to expreſs a curioſity to ſee her; and the friendſhip that commenced from that time, ſubſiſted ever after; not more to her honour, who was the favourite of perſons ſo much ſuperior to her in the outward diſtinctions of life, than to the praiſe of their judgment and taſte who knew how to prize, and took a pleaſure to cheriſh, ſuch blooming worth. She was not then twenty. Her paraphraſe of the 38th chapter of *Job* was writ at the requeſt of Biſhop *Kenn*, who was entertained in that family, and gained her a great deal of reputation.

SHE had no other tutor for the *French* and *Italian* languages, than the honourable Mr. *Thynne*, ſon to the Lord Viſcount *Weymouth*, who willingly took that taſk upon himſelf, and had the pleaſure to ſee his fair ſcholar improve ſo faſt under his leſſons, that in a few months ſhe was able to read *Taſſo*'s *Jeruſalem* with great eaſe.

HER ſhining merit, with the charms of her perſon and converſation, had procured her a great many admirers. Among others, 'tis ſaid, the famous Mr. *Prior* would have been glad to ſhare the pleaſures and cares of life with her; ſo that, allowing for the double licenſe of the Poet and Lover in the manner of expreſſion, the concluding lines in his anſwer to the paſtoral on Love and Friendſhip, by Mrs. *Singer*, were not without all foundation

foundation in truth *. She was the nameleſs Lady to whom the following copy of verſes in the ſame author is inſcribed. But Mr. *Thomas Rowe* was the perſon reſerved by heaven to be the happy man; both to be made, and to make happy.

THIS Gentleman was born at *London*, *April* 25. 1687. the eldeſt ſon of the Rev. Mr. *Benoni Rowe*, who with a very accurate judgment, and a conſiderable ſtock of uſeful learning, joined the talents of preaching, and a moſt lively and engaging manner in converſation. By both his parents he was creditably deſcended †; but, as he had too much perſonal worth to be under a neceſſity of borrowing from ſuch foreign aids, ſo he thought too juſtly to pride himſelf upon it, being able to ſay with the Poet,

Et genus & proavos, & quæ non fecimus ipſi,
Vix ea noſtra voco. OVID.

His ſuperior genius, and inſatiable thirſt after knowledge, made themſelves taken notice of, at an age when the generality of mankind have ſcarcely out-grown the merely ſenſitive life. He was able to read as ſoon almoſt as he could ſpeak; had ſuch a pleaſure in books, as to take none at all in the diverſions which children are uſually ſo fond of; and, when he was prevail'd on by his companions, which was but ſeldom, to make one in their little parties at play, his unreadineſs and inattention plainly ſhewed it was not out of choice he engaged, but purely from his good-nature and complaiſance, to which he ſhould offer too much violence, always to deny their importunity.

HE

* Vide *Prior*'s Poems, p. 32.

† He was the grandſon of *William Rowe*, Eſq; a Gentleman of worth and conſiderable eſtate, and *Alicia* (a Lady of diſtinguiſh'd ſenſe, beauty, and virtue) daughter of *Thomas Scot*, Eſq; and member of parliament for *Ailsbury*, in the county of *Bucks*: And by the maternal ſide he was deſcended from the *Rowes* of *Devon*; ſome account of which ancient family is given by Dr. *Welwood*, in his preface to the tranſlation of *Lucan*, by *N. Rowe*, Eſq; folio edit. p. 18.

He commenced his acquaintance with the *Claſſics* at *Epſom*, while his father reſided there; and by his ſwift advances in this part of learning, quickly became the delight of his maſter, a man very able in his profeſſion, and was treated by him with a very particular indulgence, in ſpite of the natural ruggedneſs and ſeverity of his temper. When Mr. *B. Rowe* removed to *London*, he placed his ſon under the care of Dr. *Walker*, the eminently learned maſter of the *Charter-houſe* ſchool, juſtly fam'd for the great numbers of excellent linguiſts that have received their education in that ancient nurſery of polite literature. He was one of thoſe who, the Doctor could eaſily foreſee, would do him honour when they ſhould appear abroad in the world, and, we may ſuppoſe, did not pleaſe him the leſs on that account. His exerciſes never failed of being diſtinguiſhed even among thoſe that had the approbation of the maſter, who when he had finiſhed his pupil in the *Latin*, *Greek*, and *Hebrew* tongues, would fain have perſuaded his father to ſend him to one of our *Engliſh* univerſities. But how honourably ſoever Mr. *Rowe* might think of the learning of thoſe noble ſeats of the muſes, not having the ſame advantageous notion of the principles in too much credit there, he would by no means truſt a ſon of his hopes in ſuch hands; but entered him firſt at a private academy in *London*, and, ſome time before his death, that he might not want any advantages which the moſt liberal education could give him, he had determined his going to *Leyden*, for the laſt hand of the great maſters there. And well did the fruit reward the expence of the culture. For, after having ſtudied *Jewiſh Antiquities* under *Witſius*, *Civil Law* under *Vitriarius*, the *Belles Lettres* under *Perizonius*, and *Experimental Philoſophy* under *Senguerdius*; and eſtabliſhed a reputation for capacity, application, and an obliging deportment both among the profeſſors and ſtudents; he returned from that celebrated mart of learning with a vaſt acceſſion of treaſure, in books he had purchaſed, and knowledge he had amaſſed, and no loſs in his morals, which he had preſerved as uncorrupt as he could have done under the moſt vigilant eye and ſtricteſt hand, though left without

all

all other reſtraints but thoſe of his own virtue and prudence.

THE love of liberty had been always one of Mr. *Rowe's* moſt darling paſſions. It was a kind of ideal miſtreſs, to whoſe charms no one ever had a ſoul more ſenſible than his; the generous inclination beat ſtrong in his breaſt, and was not to be extinguiſhed but with the vital flame. In theſe ſentiments ſo natural to him, he was not a little confirmed by his familiar acquaintance with the hiſtory, and the noble authors of ancient *Greece* and *Rome*, whoſe very ſpirit was transfuſed into him, and reſiding ſo long in a *Republic*, where he had examples continually before him, of the ineſtimable value of freedom, as the parent of induſtry, the nurſe of arts and ſciences, and univerſal ſource of ſocial happineſs; this made him, with ſo much anxiety for his native country, not very long after his return thither in the year 1708, obſerve, that a ſet of wretched principles, deſtructive of its liberties and welfare, were growing in faſhion under the countenance of ſome in power. To theſe he oppoſed himſelf with a zeal, which might have had more influence, indeed, in a higher ſphere, but could not have been more honeſt and open. Tyranny of all ſorts he moſt ſincerely deteſted, but moſt of all eccleſiaſtical, in every ſhape; deeming the ſlavery of the mind, as the moſt abject and ignominious, ſo, in its conſequences, more pernicious than any other. His *Lives* will be a glorious monument of his love of liberty and public good; to which may be added his *Poems*, in both which this commendable ardor is very viſible. From the ſame cauſe proceeded his attachment to the illuſtrious houſe of *Hanover*, in which he had the ſatisfaction to ſee the proteſtant ſucceſſion to the *Britiſh* throne take place before he died, leaving the world more willingly, after having been witneſs to this happy event.

IT was with Mr. *Rowe*, in reſpect of his learned avarice, as with thoſe that love money; his deſires after knowledge inlarged with his acquiſitions, inſtead of abating. All his morning hours, and a large part of the afternoon, were devoted to ſtudy, 'till the time of his being ſeiz'd with the diſtemper of which he died. His

library,

library, in collecting which he was aſſiſted by his great knowledge of the beſt editions of books, conſiſted of a great number of the moſt valuable authors; and as he was making continual additions to it, amounted at his death to above five thouſand volumes.

He was a perfect maſter of the *Greek*, *Latin*, and *French* languages, and, which is ſeldom known to happen, had at once ſuch a prodigious ſtrength of memory, and inexhauſtible fund of wit, the effect of a lively imagination, as would ſingly have afforded a ſtock of reputation for any man to trade upon, and much more united. This, with an eaſy fluency of words, the frankneſs and benevolence of his temper, a readineſs to communicate of his learned ſtore, and a life and ſpirit which nature muſt beſtow, ſince it can be but poorly imitated, made his company univerſally coveted, and prized by thoſe that knew him. 'Twas impoſſible there ſhould be a drowſy ſoul where Mr. *Rowe* was preſent: he animated the converſation; every one was awake, and every one pleas'd. He had a penetration, and quickneſs of thought, hardly to be imagined, ſo as, upon juſt glancing over an author, to ſee to the bottom of his ſentiments. None of the politer kinds of learning were neglected by him. He was a good judge in poetry, and had it in his power to have been himſelf an eminent poet; for he had actually the moſt eſſential parts belonging to that character, the *vivid fire*, the rich vein, the copious diction: but, as poetry was not his predominant inclination, his genius had not all the poliſhing which art and conſtant practice might have added to nature. Hiſtory was his favourite ſtudy, for which his talents of a vaſt memory, before taken notice of, and an exquiſite judgment, for one of his years, peculiarly qualified him.

He had formed a deſign to compile the lives of all the illuſtrious perſons in antiquity, omitted by *Plutarch*, and for this purpoſe read the ancient hiſtorians with great care. This deſign he in part executed. Eight lives were publiſhed ſince his deceaſe, by way of ſupplement to that admir'd Biographer; in which, tho' ſo young a guide, he ſtrikes out his way like one well acquainted with the dark and intricate parts of antiquity.

The

The ſtyle is perfectly eaſy, yet conciſe and nervous, the reflections juſt, and ſuch as might be expected from a lover of truth and mankind; and the facts intereſting in themſelves, or made ſo by the ſkill uſed in relating them. There's a preface by the reverend and learned Mr. *Chandler*, writ after the uſual manner of that agreeable and lively author, with great ſpirit and elegance, and worthy of the excellent perſon for whoſe memory he expreſſes ſo high an eſteem. "He muſt be inſenſible to true merit "(ſaith the ingenious prefacer) and to all juſt regards to "the public good, that can look over thoſe valuable re"mains, without finding in himſelf a due reſpect and e"ſteem raiſed for the author, and his own heart inſpired "with an increaſing love to the liberties and welfare of his "country." Beſides theſe *Lives*, the author had finiſhed and fitted for the preſs the life of *Theaſpbulus*, which being put into the hands of Sir *Richard Steele*, for his reviſal, was, ſome how or other, unhappily loſt, and could never ſince be recovered. Should this manuſcript be yet in being, Mr. *Theophilus Rowe*, the author's brother, will acknowledge it as a very great favour, if the perſon into whoſe hands it is fallen, will be ſo good as to return it him, in order to its being communicated to the public. The famous Mr. *Dacier* having tranſlated *Plutarch*'s Lives into *French*, with remarks hiſtorical and critical; the Abbé *Bellenger*, 'already known (ſaith the '*Journal des Sçavans*) in the republic of letters, by 'ſome works that do him honour,' added, in 1734, a ninth tome to the other eight, conſiſting of the life of *Hannibal*, and Mr. *Rowe*'s Lives made *French* by that learned Abbé: in the preface to which verſion he tranſcribes from the preface to the *Engliſh* edition the character of the author, with viſible approbation; and ſaith, the *Lives* were written with taſte, tho' being a poſthumous work, the author had not put his laſt hand to it. We may preſume from the fidelity with which the *French* tranſlator follows his original, not omitting the freeſt paſſages, and boldeſt ſtrokes againſt tyranny, or any way qualifying or correcting, and expreſſing his diſſent from them, that he had no averſion to the authors's notions of the unalienable rights and liberties of mankind. And I muſt own, it added not a little to the pleaſure

this gave me, to find an approbation in form under the hand of the perſon appointed by the *Keeper of the ſeals*, to read that work. It looks as if there were ſome true *Frenchmen* ſtill in being, the remains of a *generous race* (to uſe a warm phraſe of Mr. *Rowe*'s *) *undebauch'd by ſlaviſh ſophiſtry, and juſtly ignorant of any power not guided by the laws, and accountable to them.* May Mr. *Rowe*'s being made to ſpeak *French*, be one means of increaſing the number, and re-kindling their zeal in the glorious cauſe!

Being at *Bath* in the year 1709, Mr. *Rowe* was introduced by a gentleman of her acquaintance, into Mrs. *Singer*'s company, who lived in a retirement not far diſtant from that city. The idea he conceiv'd of her from report, and from her writings, charmed him; but when he had ſeen and converſed with her, he felt another kind of impreſſion from the preſence of ſo much beauty, wit and virtue; and the eſteem of the *Theoriſt* was converted into the rapture of a *Lover*. During the courtſhip, he writ a poetical epiſtle to a friend that was a neighbour of Mrs. *Singer*, and intimate in the family. I ſhall take the liberty to quote a few lines out of it, not ſo much for a ſpecimen of Mr. *Rowe*'s poetical genius (tho' that appears in them too) as his paſſionate veneration for Mrs. *Singer*.

Youth's livelieſt bloom, a never fading grace,
And more than beauty ſparkles in her face;
Yet the bright form creates no looſe deſires,
At once ſhe gives, and purifies our fires,
And paſſions chaſte as her own ſoul inſpires;
Her ſoul, Heav'n's nobleſt workmanſhip, deſign'd
To bleſs the ruin'd age, and ſuccour loſt mankind;
To prop abandon'd virtue's ſinking cauſe,
And ſnatch from vice its undeſerv'd applauſe.

Mrs.

* The life of *Ariſtomenes*, thus faithfully tranſlated in the *French*, *Tels étoient les principes d'un peuple généreux, qui ne s'étoit point laiſſé corrompre par de fauſſes ſubtilités, qui n'obéiſſoit point en éſclave, & qui ignoroit toute autre puiſſance que celle qui étoit dirigée & limitée par les loix.*

MRS. *Elizabeth Singer* was married to Mr. *Thomas Rowe* in the year 1710; on which occaſion a † learned friend of Mr. *Rowe*'s wrote the following beautiful *Latin* epigram:

In nuptias THOMÆ ROWE & ELIZABETHÆ SINGER.

Quid doctum par uſque tuum, ſocioſque labores
Fabræ & Dacerii, Gallia *vana crepas?*
Par majus gens Angla *dedit, juvenem atque puellam,*
Quos hodie ſacro fœdere junxit amor.
Namque ea quæ noſtri Phœbo *cecinere docente,*
Explicuiſſe tuis gloria ſumma ſoret.

Thus tranſlated by a young Gentleman:

On the marriage of Mr. THOMAS ROWE *and Mrs.* ELIZABETH SINGER.

No more, proud *Gallia*, bid the world revere
Thy learned pair, *Le Fevre* and *Dacier*;
Britain may boaſt, this happy day unites
Two nobler minds in *Hymen*'s ſacred rites:
What *theſe* have ſung, while all th' inſpiring *Nine*
Exalt the beauties of the verſe divine;
Thoſe (humble critics on th' immortal ſtrain)
Shall bound their fame, to comment and explain.

As Mrs. *Rowe*'s exalted merit and amiable qualities could hardly fail to inſpire the moſt laſting and generous paſſion, Mr. *Rowe* knew how to value that treaſure of wit, ſoftneſs and virtue, which the divine Providence had given to his arms in the moſt lovely of women, and made it his ſtudy to repay the felicity with which ſhe crowned his life. The eſteem and tenderneſs he had for her is inexpreſſible, and poſſeſſion ſeemed

† Mr. *John Ruſſel.*

ſcarce to have abated the fondneſs and admiration of the lover. 'Twas ſome conſiderable time after his marriage, that he wrote to her a very tender ode, under the name of *Delia*, full of the warmeſt ſentiments of connubial friendſhip and affection; in which the following lines may appear remarkable, as it pleaſed Heaven to diſpoſe events in a manner ſo agreeable to the wiſhes expreſſed in them.

Long may thy inſpiring page,
And great example bleſs the riſing age!
Long in thy charming priſon may'ſt thou ſtay,
Late, very late, aſcend the well-known way,
And add new glories to the realms of day!
At leaſt Heav'n will not, ſure, this prayer deny;
Short be my life's uncertain date,
And earlier far than thine the deſtin'd hour of fate!
Whene'er it comes, may'ſt thou be by,
Support my ſinking frame, and teach me how to die;
Baniſh diſponding nature's gloom,
Make me to hope a gentle doom,
And fix me all on joys to come!
With ſwimming eyes I'll gaze upon thy charms,
And claſp thee dying in my fainting arms:
Then gently leaning on thy breaſt,
Sink in ſoft ſlumbers to eternal reſt.
The ghaſtly form ſhall have a pleaſing air,
And all things ſmile, while Heav'n and thou art there.

Mr. *Rowe* had not a robuſt natural conſtitution, ſo that his intenſe application to ſtudy might, perhaps, contribute to that ill ſtate of health, which allayed the happineſs of his marriage life, during the greater part of it. In the latter end of the year 1714, his weakneſs increaſed, and he appear'd to labour under all the ſymptoms of a conſumption. This fatal diſtemper, after it had confined him ſome months, cut off the faireſt hopes of his doing great honour and ſervice to his country, and put a period to his life, *May* 13. 1715. when he

he was but juſt paſt the twenty-eighth year of his age. He died at *Hampſtead*, near *London*, where he had reſided ſome time for the benefit of the air; and was buried in the vault belonging to his family, in the cœmetery in *Buning-fields*; where, on his tomb, are only marked his name, and the date of his birth and death. But an inſcription of greater pomp is rendered unneceſſary, by the honour Mrs. *Rowe* did his memory in the elegy ſhe wrote on his death, which is deſervedly ranked among the moſt admirable of her poetical works.

THE exquiſite grief and affliction Mrs *Rowe* felt for his loſs, is deſcribed with ſuch beautiful and unaffected eloquence in the poem I have juſt mentioned, and ſeveral of the letters inſerted in the following collection, that I ſhall only add on this ſubject, that ſhe continued to the laſt moments of her life to expreſs the higheſt veneration and affection to his memory, and a particular regard and eſteem for his relations, ſeveral of whom ſhe honoured with a long and moſt intimate friendſhip. It was alſo but a ſhort time before her death, ſhe ſhewed how incapable ſhe was of forgetting him, by ſhedding freſh tears on occaſion of the mention of his name.

'TWAS only out of regard to Mr. *Rowe*, that with his ſociety ſhe was willing to bear *London* during the winter ſeaſon; and as ſoon after his deceaſe as her affairs would permit, ſhe indulg'd her unconquerable inclinations to ſolitude, by retiring to *Frome* in *Somerſetſhire*, in the neighbourhood of which place the greater part of her eſtate lay. When ſhe forſook the town, ſhe determined to return to it no more, but to conceal the remainder of her life in an abſolute retirement; yet on ſome few occaſions ſhe thought it her duty to violate this reſolution. In compliance with the importunate requeſts of the honourable Mrs. *Thynne*, ſhe paſs'd ſome months with her at *London*, after the death of her daughter the Lady *Brooke*; and on the melancholy occaſion of the deceaſe of Mrs. *Thynne* herſelf, ſhe could not diſpute the commands of the Counteſs of *Hertford*, † who earneſtly deſired her to reſide ſome time with her at *Marlborough*, to ſoften, by her converſation and friendſhip, the ſe-

† Now Ducheſs of *Somerſet*.

vere affliction of the loſs of ſo excellent a mother: And I think, once or twice more, the power this laſt Lady had over Mrs. *Rowe*, drew her, by an obliging kind of violence, to ſpend at leaſt a few months at this or ſome other of her Ladyſhip's country ſeats. Yet even on theſe occaſions, ſhe never quitted her retreat without very ſincere regret; and always returned to it again as ſoon as ever ſhe could with decency diſengage herſelf from the importunity of her noble friends.

'T'WAS in this receſs that ſhe compoſed the moſt celebrated of her works, * *Friendſhip in Death*, and the ſeveral parts of the *Letters Moral and Entertaining*. "The "drift of the *Letters from the dead* is (*as the ingenious au-* "*thor of the preface expreſſes it*) to impreſs the notion of "the ſoul's immortality, without which, all virtue and re- "ligion, with their temporal and eternal good conſequen- "ces, muſt fall to the ground; and to make the mind "contract, as it were, unawares, an habitual perſuaſion of "our future exiſtence, by writings built on that foundati- "on, and addreſſed to the affections and imagination. It may alſo be added, that the deſign both of *theſe*, and the *Letters Moral and Entertaining*, is, by fictitious examples of heroic virtue and the moſt generous benevolence, to allure the reader to the practice of every thing that ennobles human nature, and benefits the world; and by juſt and lively images of the remorſe and miſery attendant on vice, to warn the young and unthinking from being ſeduced to ruin by the inchanting name of pleaſure; the piety of which deſign is the more worthy of the higheſt panegyric, as it is ſo uncommon in witty and polite writers. The greater part of the poets of our country have apparently employ'd all their wit and art, to diſguiſe the native deformity of vice, and ſtrew flowers

* The dates of theſe ſeveral pieces are as follow:
Friendſhip in Death, in twenty Letters from the Dead to the Living, 1728.
Letters Moral and Entertaining, in Proſe and Verſe,
PART I. 1729. PART II. 1731. PART III. 1733. Theſe works of Mrs. *Rowe* were tranſlated into *French*, and publiſhed at *Amſterdam*, in the year 1740. in two volumes, 12 mo.

flowers on the paths to perdition. But this excellent Lady (as was obſerv'd of an * eminent genius of the laſt age) *poſſeſſed ſo much ſtrength and firmneſs of mind, and ſuch a perfect natural goodneſs, as could not be perverted by the largeneſs of her wit, and was proof againſt the art of poetry itſelf.* For the elegant *Letters* which gave occaſion to remark this diſtinction in Mrs. *Rowe*'s character as an author, are not only chaſte and innocent, but greatly ſubſervient to the intereſt of Heaven, and evidently deſigned, by repreſenting virtue in all her genuine beauty, to recommend her to the choice and admiration of mankind.

IN the year 1736, the importunity of ſome of Mrs. *Rowe*'s acquaintance, who had ſeen the *Hiſtory of Joſeph* in manuſcript, prevailed on her (tho' not without real reluctance) to ſuffer it to be made public. She wrote this piece in her younger years, and when firſt printed, had carried it on no farther than the marriage of the hero of the poem; but at the requeſt of her friends (particularly of an illuſtrious Lady, † to whom ſhe could ſcarce refuſe any thing) ſhe added two books, to include the relation of *Joſeph*'s diſcovery of himſelf to his brethren; the compoſing of which, I am informed, was no more than the labour of three or four days. This additional part, which was her laſt work, was publiſhed but a few weeks before her death.

THIS grand event, to prepare for which ſhe had made ſo much the buſineſs of her life, befel her, according to her wiſh, in her beloved recels. She enjoyed an uncommon ſtrength of conſtitution, and had paſſed a long ſeries of years with ſcarce any indiſpoſition ſevere enough to confine her to her bed. But about half a year before her deceaſe, ſhe was attacked with a diſtemper, which ſeemed to herſelf, as well as others, attended with danger: Tho' this diſorder (as ſhe expreſſed herſelf to one of her moſt intimate friends) found her mind not quite ſo ſerene, and prepared to meet death, as uſual; yet when by devout contemplations on the atonement and mediation of her bleſſed Redeemer, ſhe had fortified herſelf againſt that fear and diffidence,

* Mr. *Cowley*. † The Duchels of *Somerſet*.

diffidence, from which the moſt exalted piety does not always ſecure in ſuch an awful hour, ſhe experienced ſuch divine ſatisfaction and tranſport, that ſhe ſaid with tears of joy, *ſhe knew not that ſhe had ever felt the like in all her life*; and ſhe repeated on this occaſion, Mr. *Pope*'s verſes, intitled, *The Dying Chriſtian to his Soul*, with an air of ſuch intenſe pleaſure, as evidenced that ſhe really felt all the elevated ſentiments of pious ecſtacy and triumph, which breathe in that beautiful piece of ſacred poetry. After this threatning illneſs, Mrs. *Rowe* recovered her uſual good ſtate of health; and tho' at the time of her deceaſe ſhe was ſomewhat advanced in age, yet her exact temperance, and the calmneſs of her mind, undiſturbed with uneaſy cares and paſſions, encouraged her friends to flatter themſelves with a much longer enjoyment of ſo valuable a life, than it pleaſed heaven to allow them. On * the day in which ſhe was ſeized with that diſtemper, which in a few hours proved mortal, ſhe ſeemed to thoſe about her, to be in perfect health and vigour; and in the evening about eight of the clock, ſhe converſed with a friend with all her wonted vivacity, and not without laughter; after which ſhe retired to her chamber. At about ten, her ſervant hearing ſome noiſe in her miſtreſs's room, ran inſtantly into it, and found her fallen off the chair on the floor, ſpeechleſs, and in the agonies of death. She had the immediate aſſiſtance of a phyſician and ſurgeon, but all the means uſed were without ſucceſs; and after having given one groan, ſhe expired, a few minutes before two of the clock, on *Sunday* morning, *Feb.* 20. 1736 7. Her diſeaſe was judged to be an apoplexy. A pious book † was found lying open by her, as alſo ſome looſe papers, on which ſhe had wrote the following unconnected ſentences:

O guide, and counſel, and protect my ſoul from ſin!
O ſpeak, and let me know thy heav'nly will,
Speak

* *Feb.* 19. *Saturday*, at day of the week which ſhe had ſet apart, to employ a large portion of it in extraordinary devotion.

† It contained ſome meditations on religious ſubjects; but the book is loſt, and the title of it cannot be exactly remembered by thoſe who were about Mrs. *Rowe* at the time of her death.

Speak evidently to my liſt'ning ſoul!
O fill my ſoul with love, with light, and peace,
And whiſper heav'nly comforts to my ſoul!
O ſpeak, celeſtial ſpirit, in the ſtrain
Of love and heav'nly pleaſure to my ſoul!

THUS it appeared, that in reading pious meditations, or forming devout ejaculations for the divine favour and aſſiſtance, Mrs. *Rowe* made the laſt uſe of the powers of reaſon below the ſkies.

As ſhe was greatly apprehenſive that the violence of pain, or languors of a ſick-bed, might occaſion ſome depreſſion of ſpirits, and melancholy fears, unſuitable to the character and expectations of a Chriſtian, *it was her earneſt and daily prayer to Heaven*, as her manuſcript book of devotions informs me, that ſhe might not in this manner diſhonour her profeſſion; and to her friends ſhe often expreſſed herſelf deſirous of a ſudden removal to the ſkies, as it muſt neceſſarily prevent any ſuch indecent behaviour in her laſt moments: So that as the ſuddenneſs of Mrs. *Rowe*'s death muſt be numbered among the many felicities with which ſhe was favoured by Providence, it may alſo be interpreted as a reward of her ſingular piety, and a mark of the divine favour in anſwer to her prayers.

Mrs. *Rowe* ſeem'd, by the gayety and chearfulneſs of her temper, to be peculiarly fitted to enjoy life, and all its innocent ſatisfactions; yet, inſtead of any exceſſive fondneſs for things preſent and viſible, her contempt for what ſhe uſed to term a low ſtate of exiſtence, and a dull round of inſipid pleaſures, and the ardor with which ſhe breathed after the divine enjoyments of a future world, were inconceivably great. When her acquaintance expreſſed to her the joy they felt at ſeeing her look ſo well, and poſſeſſed of ſo much health as promiſed many years to come, ſhe was wont to reply, *That it was the ſame as telling a ſlave his fetters were like to be laſting; or complimenting him on the ſtrength of the walls of his dungeon.* And the fervor of her wiſhes to commence the life of angels, irreſiſtibly broke from her lips in numberleſs other inſtances.

This

This ſatiety of all things beneath the ſkies, and impatience after the perfect fruition of God, might, perhaps, be the occaſion, that in ſeveral periods of her life ſhe had flattered herſelf that ſhe was near that bleſſed ſtate on which ſhe had fixed all her hopes. And in particular, a little time before her death, ſhe expreſſed to ſeveral of her friends, her firm perſuaſion that her continuance on earth would be very ſhort; but without aſſigning any peculiar reaſon for this opinion. I would not preſume to lay any kind of ſtreſs on ſuch ſuppoſed preſages; but as they have already been related to the public, I thought it not proper to omit all mention of them.

She was buried, according to her requeſt, under the ſame ſtone with her father in the meeting-place at *Frome*; on which occaſion her funeral ſermon was preached to a very crowded auditory, by the reverend and worthy Mr. *Bowden*. Her death was lamented with very uncommon and remarkable ſorrow, by all who had heard of her virtue and merit; but particularly by thoſe of the town where ſhe had ſo long reſided, and her moſt intimate acquaintance. Above all, the news of her death touched the poor and diſtreſſed with inexpreſſible affliction; and at her doors, and over her grave, they bewailed the loſs of their benefactor, poured bleſſings on her memory, and recounted to each other the gentle and condeſcending manner with which ſhe heard their requeſts, and the numerous inſtances in which they had experienced her goodneſs and bounty.

In Mrs. *Rowe*'s cabinet were found the following letters to ſeveral of her friends, for whom ſhe had an high eſteem and affection, which ſhe had ordered to be delivered to the perſons to whom they were directed, immediately after her deceaſe; and by their obliging permiſſion, I communicate them to the public.

To the Counteſs of HERTFORD. *

MADAM,

THIS is the laſt letter you will ever receive from me; the laſt aſſurance I ſhall give you, on earth, of a ſincere and ſtedfaſt friendſhip. But when we meet again, I hope it will be in the heights of immortal love and ecſtaſy. Mine, perhaps, may be the firſt glad ſpirit to congratulate your ſafe arrival on the happy ſhores. Heaven can witneſs how ſincere my concern for your happineſs is: Thither I have ſent my ardent wiſhes, that you may be ſecured from the flattering deluſions of the world; and after your pious example has been long a bleſſing to mankind, may you calmly reſign your breath, and enter the confines of unmoleſted joy.

I am now taking my farewel of you here, but 'tis a ſhort adieu; for I die with full perſuaſion that we ſhall ſoon meet again. But oh! in what elevation of happineſs! in what enlargement of mind, and perfection of every faculty! What tranſporting reflections ſhall we make on the advantages of which we ſhall find ourſelves eternally poſſeſs'd! To him that lov'd, and waſh'd us in his blood, we ſhall aſcribe immortal glory, dominion and praiſe for ever.

THIS is all my ſalvation, and all my hope! That name in whom the gentiles truſt, in whom all the families on earth are bleſſed, is now my glorious, my unfailing confidence; in his merits alone I expect to ſtand juſtified before infinite purity and juſtice. How poor were my hopes, if I depended on thoſe works, which my own vanity, or the partiality of men, have called good; and which, examined by divine purity, would prove, perhaps, but ſpecious ſins! The beſt actions of my life would be found defective, if brought to the teſt of that unblemiſh'd holineſs, in whoſe ſight the heavens are not clean. Where were my hopes, but for a Redeemer's merits and atonement! how deſperate, how undone my condition! With the utmoſt advantages I can

* Now Ducheſs of *Summerſet*.

can boaſt, I ſhould ſtart back and tremble at the thoughts of appearing before the unblemiſh'd Majeſty.—O Jeſus, what harmony dwells in thy name! Celeſtial joy and immortal life is in the ſound! Let angels ſet thee to their golden harps! let the ranſom'd nations forever magnify thee!

WHAT a dream is mortal life! what ſhadows are the objects of ſenſe! All the glories of mortality, my much-lov'd friend, will be nothing in your view, at the awful hour of death, when you muſt be ſeparated from the whole creation, and enter the borders of the immaterial world.

SOMETHING perſuades me this will be my laſt farewel in this world! Heaven forbid that it ſhould be an everlaſting parting! May that divine protection whoſe care I implore, keep you ſtedfaſt in the faith of Chriſtianity, and guide your ſteps in the ſtricteſt paths of virtue! ADIEU, my moſt dear friend, 'till we meet in the paradiſe of God.

ELIZ. ROWE.

To the Earl of ORRERY.

My LORD,

THERE ſeems to be ſomething preſaging in the meſſage you ordered me to deliver to your charming * *Henrietta*, when I meet her gentle ſpirit in the bliſsful regions which I believe will be very ſoon. I am now acting the laſt part of life, and compoſing myſelf to meet the univerſal terror with a fortitude becoming the principles of Chriſtianity. 'Tis only thro' the great Redeemer's merits and atonement, that I hope to paſs undaunted through the fatal darkneſs.

Before him death, the griſly tyrant, flies;
He wipes the tears forever from our eyes.

ALL human greatneſs makes no figure to my preſent apprehenſion; every diſtinction vaniſhes but thoſe of virtue and real merit. 'Tis this which gives a peculiar regard for ſuch a character as yours, and gives me hopes your example will not fall ſhort of thoſe of your illuſtrious

* The late Counteſs of *Orrery*.

ſtrious anceſtors. The approaches of death ſet the world in a true light; its brighteſt advantages appear no more than a dream, in that ſolemn period. The immortal mind, perhaps, will quit a cottage with leſs regret than it would leave the ſplendor of a palace; and the breathleſs duſt ſleep as quietly beneath the graſſy turf, as under the parade of a coſtly monument. Theſe are inſignificant circumſtances to a ſpirit doom'd to an endleſs duration of miſery, or bliſs. 'Tis this important concern, my Lord, that has induced me to ſpend my time in a peaceful retirement, rather than to waſte it in a train of thoughtleſs amuſements. My thoughts are grown familiar with the ſolemnity of dying, and death ſeems to advance, not an inflexible tyrant, but as the peaceful meſſenger of liberty and happineſs. May I make my exit in that elate manner thoſe charming lines of Mr. *Pope* deſcribe.

The world recedes, it diſappears;
Heav'n opens on my eyes, my ears
With ſounds ſeraphic ring:
Lend, lend your wings! I mount! I fly!
O grave! where is thy victory?
O death! where is thy ſting?

THE nearer I am approaching to immortality, the more extenſive and inlarg'd I find the principles of amity and good-will in my ſoul: From hence ariſe the moſt ſincere wiſhes for your happineſs, and of the charming pledges your lovely *Henrietta* left. Oh! my Lord, if you would diſcharge the ſacred truſt, keep them under your own inſpection.

THIS will not reach you, my Lord, 'till I am paſt the ceremony of ſubſcribing

Your humble ſervant,

ELIZ. ROWE.

To Mr. JAMES THEOBALD.

SIR,

THE converſe I have had with you has been very ſhort, but I hope the friendſhip begun by it, will be tranſmitted to the regions of perfect amity and bliſs. It would not be worth the while to cheriſh the impreſſions of a virtuous friendſhip, if the generous engagement was to be diſſolv'd with mortal life: Such a thought would give the grave a deeper gloom, and add new horrors to the fatal darkneſs.

BUT, I confeſs, I have brighter expectations, and am fully perſuaded, thoſe noble attachments that are founded on real merit, are of an immortal date: That benignity, that divine charity, which juſt warms the ſoul in theſe cold regions, will ſhine with new luſtre, and burn with an eternal ardor in the happy ſeats of peace and love.

MY preſent experience confirms me in this truth; the powers of nature are drooping, the vital ſpark grows languid and faint; while my affection for my ſurviving friends was never more warm, my concern for their happineſs was never more ardent and ſincere.

THIS makes me employ ſome of the laſt part of my time in writing to three or four perſons, whoſe merit requires my eſteem, in hopes this ſolemn farewel will leave a ſerious impreſſion in their minds.

I am going to act the laſt and moſt important part of human life; in a little time I ſhall land on the immortal coaſts, where all is new, amazing, and unknown. But however gloomy the paſſage appears,

Sweet fields, beyond the ſwelling flood,
Stand dreſs'd in living green:
So to the Jews *old* Canaan *ſtood,*
While Jordan *roll'd between.*

Dr. WATTS.

NATURE cannot but ſhiver on the fatal brinks, unwilling to try the grand experiment, whilſt the hopes of

of Chriſtianity alone can ſupport the ſoul in this ſolemn criſis. In this exigence the eternal Spirit whiſpers peace and pardon to the dying ſaint, thro' the atonement, and brightens the ſhadow of death with ſome glimmering of immortal light.

TELL Mrs. *Theobald*, I hope to meet her i th e ſhining realms of love and unmingled bliſs;

Where crown'd with joy, and ever-blooming youth,
The jocund hours dance on their endleſs round.

ELIZ. ROWE.

To Mrs. SARAH ROWE.

My dear Mother,

I AM now taking my final adieu of this world, in certain hopes of meeting you in the next. I carry to my grave my affection and gratitude to your family, and leave you with the ſincereſt concern for your own happineſs, and the welfare of your family. May my prayers be anſwered, when I am ſleeping in the duſt! O may the angels of God conduct you in the paths of immortal glory and pleaſure! I would collect the powers of my ſoul, and aſk bleſſings for you with all the holy violence of prayer. God Almighty, the God of your pious anceſtors, who has been your dwelling-place for many generations, bleſs you!

'TIS but a ſhort ſpace I have to meaſure, the ſhadows are lengthening, and my ſun declining. That goodneſs which has hitherto conducted me, will not fail me in the laſt concluding act of life; that Name which I have made my glory and my boaſt, ſhall then be my ſtrength and my ſalvation. To meet death with a becoming fortitude, is a part above the powers of nature, and which I can perform by no power or holineſs of my own; for Oh! in my beſt eſtate I am altogether vanity; a wretched, helpleſs ſinner: But in the merits and perfect righteouſneſs of God my Saviour, I hope to appear juſtified at the ſupreme tribunal, where I muſt ſhortly ſtand to be judg'd.

E. ROWE.

SINCE Mrs. *Rowe*'s death, agreeably to her requeſt, the reverend Dr. *Watts* has reviſed and publiſhed her devotions, under the title of *Devout Exerciſes of the Heart*, &c. In which, if ſome expreſſions (as the ingenious editor obſerves, and Mrs. *Rowe* herſelf was not inſenſible) may ſeem a *little too rapturous*; a juſt regard to the ſex, and particular genius of the author, will prevail for a gentle cenſure. It could ſcarce be expected that a Lady ſhould be verſed in the art of ſtrict reaſoning; and it ought to be eaſily forgiven, if ſhe wrote on religious ſubjects, even in proſe, rather with the fire and bold licenſe of a poet, than the accuracy of a divine and a philoſopher. It may alſo be added, that many of theſe exerciſes of piety were the productions of youth; and all of them, at firſt, compoſed only to aſſiſt her own private devotion, and improvement in virtue, tho' ſhe afterwards thought fit to order them for public view after her deceaſe, in purſuance of the following vow *.

April 20. 1735.

" MY father's God; if thou wilt now ſpeedily deli-
" ver me, and ſend me an anſwer of peace, then I will
" record thy ſeveral mercies, and leave the catalogue as
" a teſtimony of thy truth, and a ſeal to the veracity of
" the ſcripture-promiſes; and leave it with a charge to
" be publiſhed to thy honour, at my death, that ages yet
" unborn may riſe up and bleſs thee, and truſt in thy
" word."

As Mrs. *Rowe* paſſed almoſt all her days in retirement, the fewneſs of the facts related in the former part of theſe memoirs, will not, I preſume, appear ſurpriſing. Her † " life was not varied with accidents to divert the
" reader: 'Twas more pleaſant for *herſelf* to live, than
" for an hiſtorian to deſcribe." So that being an uniform courſe of devotion, benevolence, and indifference to the world, when you have the hiſtory of one week of her life, you have the hiſtory of the whole. This occaſions her character, being ſo much longer than the hiſtorical part; her character which only repreſents what ſhe was every day,

* Taken from the author's manuſcript.

† Mr. *Dryden*'s expreſſions concerning *Plutarch*.

day, and which could not be ſhortened without injuſtice to her, and the world.

I SHALL not attempt to give a character of Mrs. *Rowe*'s works, ſince the number of their editions, and the approbation and applauſe they have received from ſome of the beſt judges, and moſt celebrated writers of the age, may ſeem to render any farther penegyric ſuperfluous. I will only add, that her exquiſite wit, and beautiful imagination, were ſcarce any thing indebted to the aſſiſtance of art or labour; and Mr. *Prior*, who in the preface to his poems has done juſtice to the fineneſs of her genius, might, with equal truth, have applied to her what he has ſaid of an * eminent wit of the laſt age. "Such were the natural faculties and ſtrength of *her* "mind, that ſhe had occaſion to borrow very little from "education; and *ſhe* owed thoſe advantages to *her* own "good parts, which others acquire by ſtudy and imitati-"on. *Her* wit was abundant, noble, bold. Wit, in moſt "writers, is like a fountain in a garden, ſupplied by ſe-"veral ſtreams, brought thro' artful pipes, and playing "ſometimes agreeably: But Mrs. *Rowe*'s was a ſource "ariſing from the top of a mountain, which forced its "own way, and with inexhauſtible ſupplies delighted "and inriched the country thro' which it paſſed." She read no critics, nor could her genius brook the diſcipline of rules: And as the pains of correcting appeared to her ſome kind of drudgery, ſhe ſeldom made any great alterations in her compoſures, from what they were when ſhe firſt gave copies of them to her friends. For ſhe did not ſet ſo high a value on her works, as to employ much labour in finiſhing them with the utmoſt accuracy; and ſhe wrote verſes thro' inclination, and rather as an amuſement, than as a ſtudy and profeſſion, to excel in which ſhe ſhould make the buſineſs of her life.

MRS. *Rowe* was not a regular beauty, yet ſhe poſſeſſed a large meaſure of the charms of her ſex. She was of a moderate ſtature, her hair of a fine auburn colour, and her eyes of a darkiſh grey inclining to blue, and full of fire. Her complexion was exquiſitely fair, and a natural roſy bluſh glowed in her cheeks. She ſpoke

* The Earl of *Dorſet*. See *Prior*'s dedication of his Poems.

gracefully, and her voice was exceeding ſweet and harmonious, and perfectly ſuited to that gentle language which always flowed from her lips. But the ſoftneſs and benevolence of her aſpect is beyond all deſcription: It inſpired irreſiſtible love, yet not without ſome mixture of that awe and veneration, which diſtinguiſhed ſenſe and virtue apparent in the countenance are wont to create.

HER acquaintance with the great, had taught her all the accompliſhments of good breeding, and complacency of behaviour; and without formality or affectation, ſhe practiſed, in a diſtant ſolitude, all the addreſs and politeneſs of a court. But that ſhe learned no more than the real elegancies of grandeur, ſhe calls on one of her moſt intimate friends to witneſs. *I can appeal to you* (ſays ſhe in a letter to a Lady who had long known her) *if you ever knew me deſcend to any thing of diſguiſe or artifice, in my whole conduct.* She was alſo very remote from extravagance in habit, and ſeemed to have perfectly ſubdued the love of the vain ſhew of life; in which ſhe may be thought to diſcover an elevation of ſoul ſuperior to the natural inclinations of her ſex, and great ſtrength of virtue, in reſiſting the general example of the age in which ſhe lived. The labours of the toilette conſumed very little of her time: She juſtly deſpiſed the arts of dreſs and ornament, and endeavoured to infuſe the ſame contempt of them into all her acquaintance; yet without falling into the other extreme, of indecent negligence.

THE love of ſolitude, which ſeems almoſt inſeparable from a * poetic genius, diſcovered itſelf very early in Mrs. *Rowe*, and never forſook her but with life itſelf. Before her marriage, tho' it cannot be doubted that ſhe was often ſolicited to quit her beloved obſcurity, yet ſhe had only made a ſhort viſit to the town of a few weeks. After Mr. *Rowe*'s deceaſe, as a decent retreat ſeemed to her alone ſuited to a ſtate of widowhood, her averſion to a public appearance in the world increaſed; and the approach of the decline of life, determined

* *Scriptorum chorus omnis amat nemus, & fugit urbes.*
HOR. lib. ii. ep. 2.

mined her yet more ſtrongly to devote the remainder of her days to retirement; nor could any arguments or perſuaſions of her friends, prevail with Mrs. *Rowe* to alter her ſentiments and conduct in this inſtance. This reſolution was unhappy for the world, as it deprived them of the knowledge of ſo fair a pattern of piety and goodneſs, and muſt not be generally propoſed to the imitation of the virtuous part of mankind. For, as a * celebrated writer ſays, "The good ought not to be allowed to forſake the world, unleſs the bad had the ſame moderation, and were willing to follow them into the wilderneſs." Nor did Mrs. *Rowe* recommend ſuch a conduct to others; for ſhe thus expreſſes her ſentiments on this ſubject, in a letter to a friend, which ſhe wrote a few weeks before her death. "'Tis an injury to mankind, to wiſh you had been born to a life of repoſe and leiſure: There are too few examples of generoſity and juſtice in the world, to wiſh any perſon of good character conceal'd. There are, indeed, a ſet of inſignificant and profligate mortals, who, if they ſhould take it into their heads to elope from mankind, and run wild in the woods, the public would be ſo far from being detrimented, that they would be highly obliged by it; that ſo thoſe only who are a grace to human nature, might appear in active and public ſtations. I do not, *ſays ſhe, in a letter to another friend*, affect any recluſe notions of religion; my thoughts of that are juſt the reverſe, and all eaſy and ſociable." Upon the whole, it may be ſaid with the greateſt truth, in defence of Mrs. *Rowe*'s retreat, that ſhe did not fly to deſarts that ſhe might wholly reſign herſelf to ſloth, and a monaſtic kind of devotion unprofitable to the world; but, amidſt the quiet and leiſure of ſolitude, ſhe employed no ſmall part of her time in actions of munificence and charity; or in compoſing thoſe works with which ſhe has obliged the public, which, as they inſpire the nobleſt ſentiments of benevolence and piety, may be of the moſt laſting and extenſive benefit to mankind.

THE uncommon kind of praiſe that is given to Mr. *Cowley*, by the author of his life, *that no one had ever reaſon*

* Dr. *Sprat*, Life of *Cowley*, p. 38.

reaſon to wiſh his wit had been leſs, is equally due to Mrs. *Rowe:* For, together with the moſt manly elevation of genius, ſhe poſſeſſed all that gentleneſs and ſoftneſs of diſpoſition which gives her own lovely ſex ſuch irreſiſtible charms; and was intirely free from that ſeverity of temper which has made the character of a wit unamiable, if not quite infamous. Next to lewd and profane writings, ſhe expreſſed the ſtrongeſt averſion to ſatire, as it is uſually ſo replete with perſonal malice and invective. No ſtrokes of this kind can be found in her works; and her converſation was no leſs innocent of every appearance of ill-nature, than her writings. She fortified her reſolutions againſt evil ſpeaking, by particular and ſolemn vows, as appears by the following ſacred engagement, tranſcribed from her manuſcript.

Oct. 6. 1726.

"O let me once again bind myſelf to the Lord, never "(by thy grace) to ſpeak evil of any perſon. O help me "to govern my tongue by the ſtricteſt rules of charity and "truth, and never to utter any evil ſurmiſes, or make the "leaſt reflection to the diſhonour of my neighbour. Let "me, in the minuteſt circumſtance, do to others, as I "would they ſhould act to me. Let me hope, let me "believe all things to the advantages of others. Give me "thy divine aſſiſtance to perform this great duty, and ſet "thou a watch on my words; and keep, O ſtrictly keep "the door of my lips, that I offend not with my tongue. "Now let thy grace be ſufficient for me, and thy ſtrength "be manifeſt in my weakneſs. In thy ſtrength, in the "name of the Lord my Redeemer, let me engage with "all my future temptations. Look graciouſly on this pe"tition, and remember me when I am in any ſuſpenſe, "any exigence, or am ready to forget my engagements. "In the moment that I ſhall waver, ſtrengthen me; re"ſtrain me when the malignant thought ariſes; and while "the yet unuttered words are ready to iſſue from my lips, "ſet thou thy bridle there, and govern my rebellious fa"culty."

Mrs. *Rowe* ſtrictly regulated her conduct by this ſolemn vow, and could hardly think any occaſion would juſtify

juſtify the reporting what was prejudicial to the reputation of another. "I can appeal to you (*ſays ſhe, in a letter to a Lady, with whom ſhe had lived in a long and moſt intimate friendſhip*) if you ever knew me make an envious, or an ill-natur'd reflexion on any perſon upon earth. Indeed, the follies of mankind would afford a wide and various ſcene; but charity would draw a veil of darkneſs here, and chuſe to be for ever ſilent, rather than expatiate on the melancholy theme." Scandal and detraction appeared to her ſuch extreme inhumanity, as no charms of wit and politeneſs could make tolerable. If ſhe was forced to be preſent at ſuch kind of converſation, ſhe had ſometimes (when the freedom might be decently uſed) the courage openly to condemn it; and, I believe, always the generoſity to undertake the defence of the abſent, when unjuſtly accuſed, and to extenuate even their real faults and errors.

SHE had a contempt of riches that has been rarely equalled, and which, I believe, may be looked upon as a certain mark of a truly great mind *. As ſhe expreſſed herſelf much pleaſed with the moderate fortune allotted her by the divine Providence, which afforded her eaſe and plenty to the extent of her wiſhes; ſo ſhe never purſued any deſigns to advance her circumſtances in life. She could not be perſuaded to publiſh her works by ſubſcription, or even to accept the advantageous terms offered by the bookſeller, if ſhe would permit her ſcattered pieces to be collected and publiſhed together. She wrote no dedications to the great, and the name of no miniſter of ſtate is to be found in her works. She never ſaw a court; and if ſhe has occaſionally mentioned, with honour, ſome of the princes under whoſe reign ſhe lived, it was only from a ſincere veneration for the fautors of liberty (which ineſtimable bleſſing ſhe juſtly valued) and without the leaſt expectation of any reward, beyond the pleaſure of diſcovering her gratitude to thoſe who appeared to her public benefactors to their country. The high eſteem ſhe expreſſed for ſome of her friends of diſtinguiſhed rank, was

* *Maxime admirantur eum, qui pecunia non movetur: quod in quo viro perſpectum ſit, hunc igni ſpectatum arbitrantur.*
Cic. de, Off. lib. cap. II.

was equally free from the ſuſpicion of intereſted views; for as ſhe gained nothing by their friendſhip, but the happineſs of their converſation, and an acquaintance with their virtues; the praiſes ſhe gave them, ought, in juſtice, to be looked upon as the incenſe due to merit. The love of money ſhe thought the moſt ſordid and ignoble of paſſions, and frequently lamented its too general prevalence over the human mind. She did not know her own eſtates from others, 'till ſome motives of prudence obliged her to inform herſelf, when ſhe apprehended ſhe was ſoon to leave them; and was ſo far from that rigor in exacting her due which approaches to inhumanity, that her neglect of her intereſt may rather be cenſured as exceſſive: She let her eſtates beneath their intrinſic value, as appears by the conſiderable advance of the rents ſince her deceaſe; and was ſo gentle to her tenants, that ſhe not only had no law-ſuit with any of them, but would not ſo much as ſuffer them to be threatned with the ſeizure of their goods, on the neglect of the payment of their rents. When one of them, who owed her an hundred pounds, carried off all his ſtock in the night, ſhe could not be prevailed on to embrace an opportunity in her power of ſeizing it afterwards; and if he had not in this manner quitted the eſtate, upon receiving ſome juſt menaces without her knowledge, 'tis more than probable, that her exceſs of goodneſs would have always prevented her from having recourſe to rigorous methods to eject him, and compel him to do her juſtice. 'Twould be eaſy to add ſeveral other inſtances greatly prejudicial to her intereſt, in which ſhe voluntarily departed from her right, when ſhe had the higheſt claim of equity. She could ſcarce bear the mention of injuſtice, without trembling; and the tenderneſs and delicacy of her conſcience, with regard to this ſin, was ſo great, that ſhe hardly thought ſhe could keep far enough from it. "I can "appeal to thee, *ſays ſhe in an addreſs to God*, how ſcru- "puloufly I have acted in matters of equity, and how "willingly I have injured myſelf, to right others." She ſpoke with much warmth of the extreme danger of any diſhoneſt and fraudulent practice, and expreſſed her wonder,

der, how perſons could die with any repoſe of mind, under the leaſt degree of ſuch kind of guilt.

HER indifference to glory was ſcarce leſs remarkable. As ſhe ſeemed to ſhun fame by concealing herſelf, during almoſt the whole of her life, in an obſcure ſolitude, ſo ſhe practiſed no arts to promote her reputation. She wrote no preface to any of her works, to prepoſſeſs the public in their favour *, nor ſuffered them to be accompanied with panegyrics of her friends. She would not, indeed, ſo much as allow her name to be prefixed to any of them, excepting, perhaps, ſome few poems in the earlier part of her life: And tho' this occaſioned ſeveral of her works to be aſcribed to other hands, ſhe did not alter the modeſty of her conduct. When ſhe intended to communicate to the world *Friendſhip in Death*, ſhe ſhewed the manuſcript to no more than one perſon, on whoſe ſecrecy ſhe could rely; and after he had, by her order, copied it in his own hand, ſhe ſent it to Dr. *Young*, only knowing him by his works, and inſcribed his name to the dedication, in hopes that being publiſhed by him, and appearing under the patronage of his name, all her acquaintance would imagine this piece to be written by ſome friend of that eminent poet. And when the inimitable beauties of Mrs. *Rowe*'s manner of writing, diſcovered the true author, and this performance began to be univerſally admired, ſhe ſtill continued to avoid owning it, as far as was conſiſtent with a ſtrict regard to truth: She even declined the honour due to her aſhes and memory after death; for when ſhe ſelected from her manuſcript-volume of devotions, ſome exerciſes of piety, with a view to their publication after her deceaſe, ſhe ſtudiouſly omitted thoſe parts that would have diſcovered her unexampled charity, and other virtues which moſt conciliate the eſteem and veneration of the world: Nor could any thing, perhaps, but the ſuddenneſs of her death, have prevented her committing to the flames the book I have juſt mentioned, which has ſo often aſſiſted me in my attempt to do juſtice to her character. And as ſhe intruſted the care

* Dr. *Young* was the author of the preface to *Friendſhip in Death*.

care of her poſthumous pieces to one, who ſhe (could not be inſenſible) had never entertained a thought of being an author, and whoſe incurable want of health muſt render him peculiarly unfit to compoſe any thing for public view; it is more than probable, that 'twas her intention that this collection of her remains ſhould be communicated to the world without any account of her life and character; which, thro' extreme humility, ſhe judged unworthy the knowledge and imitation of poſterity. The ſame modeſt diſpoſition of mind appears in the orders ſhe left in writing to her ſervant; in which, after having deſired that her funeral might be by night, and attended only by a ſmall number of friends, ſhe adds, "Charge Mr. *Bowden* not to ſay one word of me in the "ſermon. I would lie in my father's grave, and have "no ſtone nor inſcription over my vile duſt, which I "gladly leave to oblivion and corruption, 'till it riſe to "a glorious immortality."

MRS. *Rowe* was examplary for every relative duty. Filial piety was a remarkable part of her character. She loved the beſt of fathers as ſhe ought, and repaid his uncommon care and tenderneſs by all juſt returns of duty and affection. She has been heard to ſay, *That ſhe could die, rather than do any thing to diſpleaſe him*; and the anguiſh ſhe felt at ſeeing him in pain, in his laſt ſickneſs, was ſo great, that it occaſioned ſome kind of convulſion, a diſorder from which ſhe was wholly free in every other part of her life.

WHEN ſhe was entered into a marriage ſtate, the higheſt eſteem and moſt tender affection appeared in all her conduct to Mr. *Rowe*; and by the moſt gentle and obliging manners, and the exerciſe of every ſocial and good-natur'd virtue, ſhe confirm'd the empire ſhe had gained over his heart. She complied with his inclinations in ſeveral inſtances to which ſhe was naturally averſe; and made it her ſtudy to ſoften the anxieties and heighten all the ſatisfactions of his life. Her capacity for ſuperior things did not tempt her to neglect the leſs honourable cares which the laws of cuſtom and decency impoſe on the ſofter ſex in the connubial relation: Much leſs was ſhe led by a ſenſe of her own merit, to aſſume any thing to herſelf inconſiſtent with

that

that duty and ſubmiſſion, which the precepts of chriſtian piety ſo ſtrictly injoin. Mr. *Rowe* had ſome mixture of natural warmth in his temper, of which he had not always a perfect command: If at any time this broke out into ſome little exceſſes of anger, it never awakened any paſſion of the like kind in Mrs. *Rowe*; but, on the contrary, ſhe always remained miſtreſs of herſelf, and ſtudied, by the gentleſt language and moſt ſoothing endearments, to reſtore Mr. *Rowe*'s mind to that calmneſs which reaſon approves. And ſhe equally endeavoured, in every other inſtance, by the ſofteſt arts of perſuaſion, and in a manner remote from all airs of ſuperiority, to lead Mr. *Rowe* on towards that perfection of virtue, to which ſhe herſelf aſpired with the the trueſt chriſtian zeal. During the long illneſs which ended in his death, ſhe ſcarce ever ſtirred from him a moment, and alleviated his ſevere affliction, by performing with inconceivable tenderneſs and aſſiduity, all the offices of compaſſion ſuited to that melancholy ſeaſon. She partook his ſleepleſs nights, and never quitted his bed, unleſs to ſerve him, or watch by him. And as ſhe could ſcarce be perſuaded to forſake even his breathleſs clay, ſo ſhe conſecrated her future years to his memory, by honouring his aſhes with reſolutions of perpetual widowhood, which with a conſtancy ſuperior to her ſex, ſhe inviolably maintained. Her conduct in this laſt inſtance, on the review of it after an interval of ſeveral years, and in near proſpect of death, afforded her great ſatisfaction; for ſhe thus expreſſes herſelf in a letter intended, after her own deceaſe, to be delivered to Mrs. *Arabella Marrow*, if that Lady had ſurvived her. "The ſolitude in which I have ſpent my time ſince "Mr. *Rowe*'s death, has given me leiſure to make the "darkneſs of the grave and the ſolemnity of dying familiar ſcenes to my imagination. Whatever ſuch diſtinguiſhed ſenſe and merit could claim, I have endeavoured to pay my much-lov'd huſband's memory. I reflect "with pleaſure on my conduct on this occaſion; not "only from a principle of juſtice and gratitude to him, "but from a conſcious ſenſe of honour, and love of a "virtuous reputation after death.——But if the ſoul, in "a ſeparate ſtate, ſhould be inſenſible of human cenſure

" or applauſe, yet there is a diſintereſted homage due to " the ſacred name of virtue.

She mourned over the death of her huſband and father, with all that becoming tenderneſs and ſenſibility which ought to touch every human and generous heart, at the loſs of the deareſt perſons on earth; yet her ſubmiſſion to the determination of divine providence was exemplary, and ſhe never preſumed to breathe any criminal murmurs againſt the will of Heaven, which is ever juſt and good, or behaved, in this hour of temptation, in a manner unſuitable to that eminent piety which appeared in every other part of her life.

She was a gentle and kind miſtreſs; treating her ſervants with great condeſcenſion and goodneſs, and almoſt with the affability of a friend and equal. She cauſed due care to be taken of them, when they were ill; and did not think it miſbecame her to ſit by the bed of a ſick ſervant to read to her books of piety. Her great humanity would not ſuffer her to be offended with light faults; and as ſhe never diſmiſſed any one from her family, ſo, I think, none of her ſervants ever left her, but with a view to the changing their condition by marriage. She knew when ſhe was well ſerved, and repoſed ſo much truſt in thoſe whoſe fidelity ſhe had experienced, that it might ſeem to verge towards exceſs; yet, even ſuch great confidence was hardly more than was due to that ſervant who was with Mrs. *Rowe* at the time of her death; whoſe long and faithful duty to her miſtreſs, and remarkable ſorrow for her loſs, deſerve to be mentioned with honour.

She was a warm and generous friend, juſt, if not partial, to the merit of thoſe whom ſhe loved, and moſt gentle and candid to their errors. She was always forward to do them good offices; but in a diſtinguiſhed manner ſhe ſtudied, with infinite art and zeal, to inſinuate the love of virtue into all her acquaintance, and to promote their moſt important intereſt, by inciting them to the practice of every thing that would recommend them to higher degrees of the divine favour. This ſhe propoſed as the beſt end of friendſhip.

Mrs. *Rowe* was not entirely free from the attacks of malice, that ſhe might not be without opportunity to exerciſe

erciſe the divine virtue of forgiveneſs; yet one could ſcarce have learned from her diſcourſe that ſhe had an enemy; for ſhe was not wont to complain of any indecent conduct or injuries done to herſelf: So that it was apparent, ſuch things made light impreſſions on her mind; or that ſhe had endeavoured to efface them with the happieſt ſucceſs.

'Tis a celebrated thought of the Emperor * *Julian*, which he makes *M. Antoninus* expreſs, when he repreſents him, with other *Roman* Emperors, undergoing the ſcrutiny of *Jupiter*: When he was aſked what he had done to merit an *Apotheoſis*, he replied, *He had always ſtudied to reſemble the Gods:* And being aſked again, In what he had endeavoured to be like them, he anſwered, *In having as few wants as poſſible of my own, and doing good moſt extenſively to others.* This is certainly a juſt account of a divine temper; and this was, in a great degree, the temper of Mrs. *Rowe:* For ſcarce any of the human race was more ſenſible of the truth of that ſaying of the ſacred Founder of our religion, *It is more bleſſed to give than to receive.* "There is, (ſays ſhe in a letter to a Lady, written ſo early as in the year 1697, "an eternal propenſity in my ſoul to love and benefi-"cence. I received the generous principle with the "breath of life, and find it inſeparable from my exiſtence. And in her later years, ſhe ſaid to another of her moſt intimate friends, *Half the pleaſure of my life would be loſt, if there were no poor.* Nor was this only the peculiar ſoftneſs of her ſex, or a natural felicity of temper, but the moſt virtuous deſire to diffuſe happineſs. Her zeal to do generous actions is inexpreſſible; it broke out on all poſſible occaſions; and there was not, I believe, one of her friends in any rank of life, who did not experience her beneficent diſpoſition, by receiving from her preſents of books, pictures, *&c.* if not gifts of higher value.

HER charities were ſo great (if we conſider the mediocrity of her fortune) that they can ſcarce be paralel'd, except in the hiſtories of better times, when Chriſtianity had all its due power over the hearts of thoſe who

* *Juliani Caeſaris*, Edit. Par. p. 91.

profeſſed it: They were, indeed, only limited by the utmoſt extent of her power; for ſhe devoted the whole of her income, beſides what was barely ſufficient for the neceſſities of life, to the relief of the indigent and diſtreſſed. This her manuſcript acquaints us with, in the following vow; which, as it evidences a heart glowing with the love of God and mankind, is worthy of the higheſt praiſe; but as this ſolemn engagement involved Mrs. *Rowe* in ſome perplexities, it ſeems peculiarly fit to add, that her example ought not to influence pious minds thus to fetter themſelves in things not abſolutely commanded; ſince the obſervation of ſuch vows may be attended with unforeſeen difficulties injurious to the future peace of their lives.

" I CONSECRATE half my yearly income to char-
" table uſes. And tho', by this according to human ap-
" pearances, I have reduced myſelf to ſome neceſſity, I
" caſt all my care on that gracious God to whom I am
" devoted, and to whoſe truth I ſubſcribe with my hand.
" I atteſt his faithfulneſs, and bring in my teſtimony to
" the veracity of his word; I ſet to my ſeal, that God
" is true; and oh! by the God of truth, I ſwear to per-
" form this, and beyond this. For if thou wilt indeed
" bleſs me, and enlarge my coaſt, all that I have beyond
" the bare convenience and neceſſity of life, ſhall ſurely
" be the Lord's. And oh! grant me ſufficiency, that I
" may abound in every good work. O let me be the
" meſſenger of conſolation to the poor. Here I am,
" Lord, ſend me. Let me have the honour to admi-
" niſter to the neceſſities of my brethren. I am, indeed,
" unworthy to wipe the feet of the leaſt of the ſervants of
" my Lord, much more unworthy of this glorious com-
" miſſion; and yet, oh! ſend me, for thy goodneſs is
" free. Send whom thou wilt on embaſſies to the kings
" and rulers of the earth; but let me be a ſervant to
" the ſervants of my Lord. Let me adminiſter conſola-
" tion and relief to the afflicted members of my exalted
" and glorious Redeemer. Let this be my lot, and I give
" the glories of the world to the wind.

PURSUANT to this ſacred vow, *which* (as ſhe expreſſes

preſſes herſelf in another place of her manuſcript) *was not made in an hour of fear and diſtreſs, but in the joy and gratitude of her ſoul*, ſhe not only avoided all ſuperfluous expences in dreſs and luxury, but thro' an exceſs of benevolence (if there can be any exceſs in ſuch a godlike diſpoſition) to inlarge her abilities of doing good to her fellow-creatures, ſhe denied herſelf what might, in ſome ſenſe, be called the real neceſſaries of life.

HER writings give a faithful picture of her ſoul. Her profound humility, and ſupreme affection to God; her faith in his promiſes, and dependence on his providence; her zeal for his glory, and love to the holineſs of his laws, appear in the ſtrongeſt light in her works; and particularly in her *Devotions*, publiſhed ſince her death by the reverend Dr. *Watts*. But as it would too much ſwell theſe memoirs to tranſcribe her ſentiments on theſe heads, I ſhall only relate the means ſhe made uſe of to cultivate theſe excellent diſpoſitions; with the addition of ſome paſſages from her manuſcripts, that have not yet been communicated to the public.

SHE devoted herſelf to the ſervice of Heaven in a ſolemn covenant *. In this ſhe intimated the example of her pious mother, to whoſe ſacred engagement of this kind Mrs. *Rowe* has made this addition, which evidently appears by the hand to be written in her younger years.

" MY God, and my father's God, who keepeſt covenant and mercy to a thouſand generations, I call thee " to witneſs, that with all the ſincerity of my ſoul I conſent to this covenant, and ſtand to the ſolemn dedication made of me in my baptiſm: And to this

" I God's high name my awful witneſs make.

" And thus with the utmoſt willingneſs and joy, I ſubſcribe with my hand to the Lord.

E. SINGER.

AND beneath, in the ſame paper, ſhe writes thus: " Renew'd *Sept.* 1728. When I am ſtanding before the " Judge of all the earth, to be ſentenced for all eternity,

* See Vol. II. p. 92.

" let this contract be an evidence that I renounce the " world, and take the ſupreme God for my portion and " happineſs.

HER manuſcript alſo affords the following larger renewal of this ſacred covenant.

" LET me renew my vows to thee, let me repeat the " ſacred obligation; let my ſoul collect its powers; let " me, if poſſible, make my ties more ſtrong—more in- " tirely devote myſelf to thee. With what pleaſure do " I reflect on the obligations I have to be thine! I bleſs " the ſacred engagement, and would not be free, for ten " thouſand worlds. I never knew a happy moment 'till " I was thine; all my joys are dated from that bleſt pe- " riod; from thence they took their ſpring, and from " thence they will forever flow. Oh! therefore let me " joyfully renew my vows to thee; let angels inſtruct me " how to confirm them; let them teach me their forms, " and give me their flames; let all be noble, and pa- " thetic, and ſolemn as their immortal vows. I would " bind myſelf beyond the ties that mortals know—But " I cannot ſpeak with the ardor I wiſh; I cannot find " words to expreſs the vehemence of my ſoul! But oh! " thou who canſt underſtand thoſe deſires which lan- " guage fails me to utter, accept the ſincerity of my " heart, regard and accept my vows; and oh! let them " be confirm'd forever.

" ATTEND, ye angels! let heaven and earth hear me! " let the moſt high God, the poſſeſſor of heaven and " earth, himſelf be my witneſs! for even to him I dare " appeal, from whom no diſguiſe can veil my thoughts; " even thy ſacred name I dare atteſt, whoſe favour is " my hope, and whoſe frown is the only thing I can " fear. Yet my words are not the effect of terror and " diſtreſs, but of reaſon and of love. No action of my " life was ever more deliberate and voluntary. My ſoul " gives its intire aſſent, and offers up all its powers; I " make no reſerve, thou haſt my whole, my undivided " heart.

" O THOU that lookeſt down from the exaltations of " thy Majeſty, that rideſt upon the heavens in thy ex-

" cellency;

" cellency; and from thence doſt not diſdain to be a fa-
" ther to the fatherleſs, and the judge of the widow; I
" come to thee deſtitute, forlorn, and abandon'd of every
" name of joy or confidence upon earth. I have found
" all the ſpecious titles and relations among men to be
" vanity and a lye: But I rejoice in the conviction, I bleſs
" the happy circumſtance that has thrown a reproach on
" all human truſt; that has broke my engagements with
" every thing below, and forced me, friendleſs and de-
" fenceleſs, to fly to thee. Oh! receive me with the
" affection of a father; take me into thy tendereſt care
" and protection. Oh! remember thy covenant with
" my pious anceſtors, to be a God to them, and their
" ſeed after them, by an everlaſting covenant. Thy
" compaſſions exceed thoſe of the tendereſt relation on
" earth; thou doſt delight to exerciſe loving-kindneſs
" and truth in the earth; thou art the God of all grace
" and conſolation: Theſe are thy free, thy natural ope-
" rations. *Fury is not in thee*; thy name, thy boaſted
" name is LOVE; and thou doſt never deviate from its
" gentle dictates; 'tis the beginning and end of all thy
" works, the glorious end thou hadſt from all eternity
" in view: Thou doſt not withdraw thy eyes from this
" deſign, but haſt ſet thy heart upon it from everlaſting
" to everlaſting. Goodneſs and compaſſion for ever flow
" from thee: Thou canſt not reſtrain thoſe glorious e-
" manations; they will, and muſt forever ſtream from
" thee, the infinite abyſs, the ſpring of goodneſs, the
" plenitude of joy, its never-failing ſource.

" OH, thou haſt purchaſed my ſoul with thy own blood
" before God and angels, I put it into thy cuſtody; with
" thee I ſolemnly depoſite the ſacred pledge, into thy
" hand I commit the precious treaſure; 'tis my all, my
" very being: Oh, form it after thy pleaſure, and ſecure
" it from the ſtratagems of hell. I am ſurrounded with
" danger, and a thouſand unſeen ſnares attend me; I
" have but one caſt for eternity. Look with eyes of pity
" on my impotence and diſtreſs; I fly to thee, let me
" find a hiding-place from the wind, a covert from the
" tempeſt.

" I AM not, I cannot be my own keeper; fleſh and
" blood is too weak to ſtruggle with principalities,

" and

" and powers, and the rulers of darkneſs in high places;
" the combination is too ſtrong for unaſſiſted nature to
" conquer. Thou knoweſt my ſtrength is but weakneſs,
" my wiſdom folly, my natural light all darkneſs. I
" know not the next ſtep before me, and if I ſtumble,
" 'twill bring reproach on thy holy ways.

" I AM of the Lord's ſide; I am in league with thee
" againſt the confederacy of hell: I liſt myſelf under
" thy banners, to oppoſe the kingdom of darkneſs; give
" me ſtrength and wiſdom to encounter all oppoſition;
" let me never be left to my own conduct, or diſhonour
" thy cauſe by any weakneſs or inadvertency: O thou
" that doſt not ſlumber nor ſleep, watch my goings, and
" let none of my foot-ſteps ſlide. O Fountain of love
" and grace, let me feel thy preſent influences. There is
" no relation in all nature ſo near, as that between God
" and a virtuous mind: And wilt thou not adorn it with
" thoſe graces which are capable of being improved for-
" ever?

" IN the name of the Lord God of hoſts, the God of
" the armies of *Iſrael*, let me conquer the principalities
" and powers of darkneſs. I have taken thy word for
" my defence, I have fled to the name of the Lord for
" ſafety; let me rejoice, let me triumph in that ſanctu-
" ary, nor know a thought of diffidence or fear. Let
" me hope againſt hope, believe above belief, with con-
" fidence worthy of that power on which I truſt, and of
" that veracity which is engaged to protect me. Be the
" powers of hell confounded, while I make my boaſt in
" the Lord, and rejoice in thy ſalvation!

" I CAN, I muſt, I dare ſet to my ſeal, that God is
" true. I need not ſcruple to affirm what thou haſt at-
" teſted; I may, without heſitation, give my aſſent to
" the words of the living God. Let not my foot ſteps
" ſlide, keep me in the ways of life and ſalvation, direct
" every motion, for thou art my only counſellor. Leave
" me not to chuſe for myſelf; give me no advantage but
" what I may employ for thy glory; cancel every pray-
" er that has not been agreeable to thy will. I retract
" every petition whoſe ſucceſs will not centre in thy in-
" tereſt; 'tis thee, and not myſelf, I would honour;
" 'tis thee I would live and die for. Make thy own

" terms,

" terms, let them be what they will, I take thee for my
" only portion for this life, and to all eternity: And
" with full conſent I ſubſcribe with my hand to the Lord.

* *Sept.* 11. 1725. *E. ROWE.*

SHE practiſed ſecret prayer three times a-day, as appears by this reſolution taken from her manuſcript: *At morning, at noon, and at night, I will praiſe thee, and pay my conſtant homage to the ſupreme and independent Being.* And as ſhe was wont to ſay, *That we ought to conſecrate our brighteſt intervals to the ſervice of Heaven*; agreeably to theſe juſt ſentiments, ſhe employed thoſe parts of the day in which ſhe believed the powers of the mind moſt free and active, as ſeaſons of holy retirement: But (as far as I could judge) her devotions were rather frequent, than protracted to ſuch an undue length, as might tend to diſtract the attention, and fatigue and exhauſt the ſpirits; a fault into which ſome pious perſons have incautiouſly fallen.

SHE had an high veneration and love to the Lord's day, which, abſtaining from worldly affairs and pleaſures, ſhe wholly conſecrated to the ſervice of religion. No ſlight indiſpoſition, nor any ſeverity of weather, prevented her conſtant attendance on public worſhip; at which her attentive and reverend behaviour ſhewed the utmoſt compoſure and elevation of ſoul. She alſo, in imitation of our bleſſed Saviour's example of doing good on the *Sabbath*, ſanctified the Lord's day, by entertaining a ſet of poor people at her houſe, and by an abundant diſtribution of charity. But her devout regard to the public worſhip of God will beſt appear by the following paſſage extracted from the manuſcript volume of her devotions, which I have ſo often cited.

" I SOLEMNLY ſet apart one day in the week (if poſ-
" ſible *Saturday*) for my retired devotions, to prepare my
" ſelf for the noble employment of public worſhip; and
" then let all the powers of my ſoul be exerciſed in love
" and humble adoration. Let me make more ſenſible
" approaches to the propitious Being whom, unſeen, I
love;

* Mrs. *Rowe's* birth-day.

" love; and let him fill me with the ineffable delights " his preſence affords, and make me joyful in the houſe " of prayer: Let me be abundantly ſatisfied with the " fatneſs of his houſe, and drink of the rivers of his plea- " ſure.

SHE never neglected any opportunity of partaking of the holy communion, for which ſhe had the higheſt affection and reverence; and the ſame manuſcript will ſhew what virtuous reſolutions ſhe made at ſuch ſacred ſeaſons.

" WITH every ſacrament let me renew my ſtrength, " and with the bread of life receive immortal vigour. " Let me remember the vows of God, and at my return " to the world, let me commit my ways to thee. Let " me be abſolutely reſign'd to thy providence, nor once " diſtruſt thy goodneſs and fidelity. Let me be careful " for nothing, but with prayer and ſupplication make " my wants known to thee. Let the moſt awful ſenſe of " thy preſence dwell on my heart, and always keep me " in a ſerious diſpoſition. Let me be merciful and juſt " in my actions, calm and regular in my thoughts: And " oh! do thou ſet a watch on my mouth, and keep the " door of my lips. Let me ſpeak evil of no man; let " me advance the reputation of the virtuous, and never " be ſilent in the praiſe of merit. Let my tongue ſpeak " the language of my heart, and be guided by exact truth " and perfect ſincerity. Let me open my hands wide to " the wants of the poor, in full confidence that my hea- " venly Father will ſupply mine; and that the high Poſ- " ſeſſor of heaven and earth will not fail to reſtore, in " the hour of my diſtreſs, what I have parted with for " his ſake.

" O LET thy grace be ſufficient for me, and thy " ſtrength be manifeſt in my weakneſs. Be preſent with " me in the hour of temptation, and confirm the pious " reſolutions thou haſt enabled me to form.

SHE had an inexpreſſible love and veneration for the *Holy Scriptures*, and was aſſiduous in the reading of them;

them; particularly the *New Teſtament*, the *Pſalms*, and thoſe parts of the prophetical writings which relate to our bleſſed Saviour. For ſome time before her death, ſhe ſcarce read any thing but theſe ſacred books, and practical treatiſes on religious ſubjects. She was alſo wont to aſſiſt her improvement in virtue and the Chriſtian life, by frequent meditations on the bleſſedneſs of a future ſtate, the perfections of God, particularly his infinite goodneſs and mercy in the redemption of the world by *Jeſus Chriſt*; and on other important parts of religion, which appeared beſt ſuited to promote devout and holy diſpoſitions. And beſides theſe her uſual exerciſes of piety, in the latter part of her life, ſhe obſerved ſome ſtated ſeaſons of abſtinence and extraordinary devotion.

THE fervor of her zeal in the cauſe of religion, was beyond the rate of common examples. As ſhe could not command her tears of tranſport, when ſhe was witneſs to any eminent inſtance of piety, ſo the ſinking ſtate in which the intereſt of Heaven now appears, rent her very ſoul; and as ſhe ſaw with inexpreſſible grief the fatal advances of infidelity in this nation, ſhe ſpoke with the higheſt eſteem and gratitude of thoſe excellent perſons, who, in the preſent age, have defended Chriſtianity by their learned writings, and truly venerated them as public benefactors to mankind.

HER friendſhips were founded on virtue, but not a perfect agreement in thoſe leſſer matters which divide us as Chriſtians and *Engliſhmen*; in which ſhe ſhewed a generous mind, elevated above the mean principles of party and bigotry. She was favoured with the eſteem and acquaintance of the Counteſs of *Winchelſea*, the Viſcounteſs *Weymouth*, the Viſcounteſs *Scudamore*, the Lady *Carteret*, the Lady *Brooke*, the honourable Mrs. *Thynne*, the Earl of *Orrery*, Dr. *Kenne*, Lord Biſhop of *Bath* and *Wells*, Sir *Richard Blackmore*, Dr. *Watts*, Mr. *Prior*, Mr *Grove*, &c. But above all ſhe poſſeſſed the higheſt degree of friendſhip with another illuſtrious ornament of the age, which as it began as ſoon as ever her Ladyſhip was capable of this generous paſſion, ſo it continued without the leaſt interruption to the laſt moments of Mrs. *Rowe*'s life. And

it

it gives me great pleaſure, that I can conclude the character of a Lady whoſe memory ought to be moſt dear to me, with this teſtimony to her virtue and merit; that her life was honoured with the friendſhip, and her death lamented with the tears of the Counteſs of HERTFORD *.

* Now her Grace FRANCES Duches of SOMERSET.

To

TO

Dr YOUNG.

SIR,

I Have no deſign in this dedication, but to expreſs my gratitude for the pleaſure and advantage I have received from your poem on the LAST JUDGMENT, and the *Paraphraſe on part of the Book of Job.*

The author of theſe *Letters* is above any view of intereſt; and can have no proſpect of reputation, reſolving to be concealed. But if they prove a ſerious

XLIV

entertainment to perſons whoſe leiſure-hours are not always innocently employed, the end is fully anſwered.

The greateſt infidel muſt own, there is at leaſt as much probability in this ſcheme, as in that of the *Fairy tales*; which however viſionary, are ſome of them moral and entertaining.

I am,

SIR,

Your moſt humble ſervant, &c.

THE PREFACE.

THE drift of theſe letters is, to impreſs the notion of the ſoul's immortality; without which, all virtue and religion, with their temporal and eternal good conſequences, muſt fall to the ground.

Some who pretend to have no ſcruples about the being of a God, have yet their doubts about their own eternal exiſtence, though valuable authors abound in Chriſtian *and* Moral proofs *of it.*

But ſince no means ſhould be left unattempted in a point of ſuch importance, I hope endeavouring

vouring to make the mind familiar with the thoughts of our future exiſtence, and contract, as it were unawares, an habitual perſuaſion of it, by writings built on that foundation, and addreſſed to the affections and imagination, will not be thought improper, either as a doctrine, or amuſement: Amuſement, *for which the world makes by far the largeſt demand; and which, generally ſpeaking, is nothing but an art of forgetting that immortality, the firm belief and advantageous contemplation of which this amuſement would recommend.*

THE

THE

CONTENTS.

LETTERS from the *Dead* to the *Living*.

LET. I. TO the Earl of *R*——*r* from *Clerimont*, who had promiſed to appear to him after his death. The purport of this epiſtle is, to draw his Lordſhip from that contemptible idea which he had entertained of all things ſacred, and to convince him, from the particular inſtance of his brother's heroic deportment in the agonies of death, of the certainty of a future ſtate, and the immortality of the ſoul *Pag.* 1 *to* 4

LET. II. From *Altamont*, who died at *Conſtantinople*, to his friend in *England*, giving him an account of the manner of his death, and the principal occaſion of it; concluding with a pathetic deſcription of his infinitely more happy ſtate on his firſt entrance into another world 4 *to* 5

LET. III. To the Counteſs of —— from *Narciſſus*, her only ſon and heir, who died when he was but two years old. This is a conſolatory epiſtle, repreſenting, in the moſt endearing terms, the unreaſonableneſs of her grief; ſince all the earthly grandeur to which he was intitled by his birth, was but pageantry and farce, in compariſon with the innate dignity of his immortal ſtate, and the glories to which he was advanced 5 *to* 8

LET. IV. To my Lord —— from *Ethelinda*, a young lady, who, though deeply in love with him, choſe rather to die in a convent, than to make her eſcape from that holy retreat to which her moſt ſolemn vows had confined her 8 *to* 10

LET. V. To —— from *Junius*, giving his friend, according to promiſe, a deſcription of the planetary worlds, and the inhabitants of thoſe happy regions 10 *to* 12

LET. VI.

LET. VI. From *Amanda* to ——, acknowledging her virtue, though paſſionately beloved by her huſband; who, upon hearing of her marriage with one *Montandre*, reſolved to make away with himſelf, and fell on his ſword accordingly, leaving behind him an only daughter, friendleſs, and expoſed to the wide world. The motive of this letter is, to beg of her friend to take the charge of her poor orphan, and to protect her infant-innocence 12, 13

LET. VII. To *Æmilia* from *Delia*, giving her a beautiful deſcription of the inviſible regions, and the happy ſtate of the inhabitants of paradiſe 13 *to* 15

LET. VIII. To —— from *Amintor*; in which he firſt acknowledges, with gratitude, her ſincere paſſion for him, and her readineſs to attend him in his laſt voyage to *Spain*; and then relates how he loſt his life in her defence, in that unfortunate engagement with an *Algerine* corſair, wherein ſhe was taken a priſoner, and afterwards made a ſlave to a *Baſſa*. The purport of the remaining part of the letter is, to diſſuade her from the raſh reſolution which ſhe had taken to poiſon him for the preſervation of her chaſtity; and to induce her rather to ſubmit to the diſpenſations of divine providence, who, in reward to her virtue, would find out ſome means or other for her eſcape 15 *to* 17

LET. IX. To *Sylvia* from *Alexis*. The intention of this letter is to inform her, that ſhe is the natural daughter of a perſon of quality, and not the real iſſue of her ſuppoſed parents; and to forewarn her of the danger that attended her in liſtening to the addreſſes of the Lord ———, who in reality was her own brother 18 *to* 21

LET. X. To *Leonora* from *Clerimont*, her guardian; who, tho' violently in love with her, choſe rather to die than diſhonourably to ſeduce her, her fortune being vaſtly ſuperior to his own. The motive of this letter is to aſſure her, that the virtuous after death are in a ſtate of perfection and happineſs; and to forewarn her, as ſhe was now under her brother's care, of his diſſolute and licentious manners, and of the thouſand dangers to which, through his means, her virtue would be expoſed 21 *to* 24

LET. XI. Another to the ſame; in which he firſt congratulates her on her recovery from a dangerous fit of ſickneſs, and then diſcovers the diſingenuous behaviour and perfidiouſneſs of one of her brother's profligate companions, who made his addreſſes to her, though privately married to a young lady, whom he had ungratefully abandoned to miſery and deſpair 24, 25

LET. XII. From *Cleander* to his brother, endeavouring to reclaim him from his extravagancies, by giving him a full account of the cowardly manner in which one of his diſſolute, Atheiſtical companions reſigned his life in a foreign country; concluding with ſome pathetical reprehenſions of his ill conduct 25 *to* 28

LET. XIII. To *Climene* from ——, giving her timely warning to ſhun the addreſſes of the perfidious *Alcander*, to whoſe vows and proteſtations if ſhe once liſtened, ſhe was ruined beyond redemption 28 *to* 30

LET. XIV. From —— to his ſiſter, demonſtrating the unreaſonableneſs of her grief on account of his ſudden death, ſince it was an immediate tranſition to a ſtate of immortality and endleſs bliſs 30. 31

LET. XV. From *Philander* to *Henrietta*, giving her an account of his being drowned in his voyage to the *Indies*, of his paſſage thro' the mighty waters to the planetary regions, and of his progreſs from thence to the manſions of the bleſſed; whoſe pleaſures are everlaſting, unutterable, and beyond deſcription 31. 32

LET. XVI. To my Lord —— from *Serena*, perſuading him not to imagine, that all apparitions are the reſult only of fear and fancy; to liſten to her advice, and make preparation for his death, ſince in a few weeks his laſt hour would infallibly be determined 33. 34

LET. XVII. From *Ibrahim*, a *Turkiſh Baſſa*, to *Philocles*, acknowledging that he was the principal inſtrument of his converſion to the *Chriſtian* faith; and deſiring him to ranſom a beautiful *Grecian* ſlave, whom he had ſeduced in his lifetime, and prevailed on to renounce her moſt holy religion 34 *to* 37

LET. XVIII. From the deceaſed *Euſebius* to his ſon, charging him to retract a challenge which he had ſent to *Lindamor*, his generous friend, whoſe ſincerity was his only crime; and not ſhamefully to eſpouſe the cauſe of a licentious beauty, who had neither virtue nor reputation to defend 37 *to* 39

LET. XIX. To my Lord —— from *Mariana*, his deceaſed wife, perſuading him to be juſt to his obligations to the injured *Sylviana*, and to ſet bounds to thoſe vicious inclinations which he had indulged ſince her death without reluctance and controul 39 *to* 41

LET. XX. From *Theodoſius* to *Varrius*, diſſuading him from the purſuit of an amour with the beautiful *Cleora*; which, as ſhe was the wife of his generous benefactor, muſt inevitably plunge her into guilt and infamy, and brand himſelf with the ignominious character of being perfidious, and ungrateful to the beſt of friends 41 *to* 43

Thoughts on DEATH, tranſlated from the *Moral Eſſays* of Meſſieurs *De Port-Royal* 44 *to* 47

LETTERS Moral and Entertaining.

PART I.

LET. I. FRom *Philario* to *Chamont*, giving a particular account of his unhappy amour with *Amaſia* 48 *to* 52

LET. II. From *Caſſander* to a gentleman at *Venice*, relating all the aggravating circumſtances of a barbarous murder, which he committed in a fit of jealouſy on an imaginary rival; and deſcribing, in the moſt pathetic terms, his remorſe of conſcience for ſuch a flagrant violation of the laws of friendſhip and humanity 53 *to* 57

LET. III. To *Belinda* from *Sylvia*, ingenuouſly confeſſing, that a guilty paſſion was the real cauſe of her ſudden retirement into the country; and relating the particular manner of her avoiding the fatal effects of it, and the ineffable ſatisfaction which ſhe found in the ſecret approbation of her own conduct 58 *to* 61

See the continuation of her ſtory in Part II. *p.* 148.

LET. IV. To *Euſebius* from *Philander*, acknowledging the obligations he had laid him under, by working a reformation both in his principles and manners. In this letter is introduced a beautiful *rhapſody*, inſcribed *To the unknown God* 62 *to* 64

LET. V. To Mrs —— from *Amoret*, giving an account of her criminal paſſion for *Sebaſtian*; and deſcribing, in the moſt moving

moving terms, the manner in which he ſeduced her, and her remorſe of conſcience on the reflexion of her ill conduct 64 *to* 67

LET. VI. To my Lord ——— from *Evander*, demonſtrating the vaſt advantages of a virtuous man over a libertine, ſuppoſing his expectations of future bliſs ſhould prove a fiction, and Chriſtianity ſhould be nothing more than a mere deluſion 67 *to* 72

LET. VII. From *Herminius* to his ſiſter, acquainting her, that he had once a criminal paſſion for *Cleora*; but that her ſoft and engaging behaviour towards *Philaret* her huſband, and her juſt neglect of all his amorous addreſſes to her, had made him a proſelyte to virtue 72 *to* 75

LET. VIII. From *Bellamour* to *Carlos*, relating the ſtory of his paſſion for *Almeda*, and the unexpected interruption of his happineſs, by a raſh offer of his ſervices to another lady, in hopes of being rejected 75 *to* 78

See the continuation of his ſtory in Part II. *p.* 194.

LET. IX. To *Philario* from the Duke of ———, reflecting, with the utmoſt reluctance and remorſe, in the agonies of death, on his miſ-ſpent life, and his open violation of all things ſacred 78 *to* 81

LET. X. From *Celadon* to *Amaſia*, reproaching her with having ſeduced him into a criminal converſation with her, notwithſtanding the infinite obligations he lay under to her huſband, who was his guardian, benefactor, and beſt of friends 81 *to* 84

LET. XI. To my Lord ——— from *Philander*, on the pleaſures of retirement, and the vanity of riches and the moſt illuſtrious titles; in which is introduced a beautiful *ſoliloquy*, addreſſed to the Great Spirit of Nature 85 *to* 89

LET. XII. To *Myrtillo* from *Leander*, a phyſician, giving him an account of his falling in love with a fair ſtranger in the country; in which is introduced a poetical deſcription of the place where he firſt ſaw her, and of the goddeſs he adored 89 *to* 91

LET. XIII. Another to the ſame, giving an account of his miſtreſs's illneſs, his accidental attendance on her, her contempt of all earthly enjoyments, and her laſt dying words, which had made too deep an impreſſion on his mind ever to be eraſed 91 *to* 94

LET. XIV. From *Myrtilla* to *Hermione*, giving her an account of

of her brother's paſſion for her, the ſevere obligations her father laid him under of ſeeing her no more, his paſſive obedience to thoſe paternal injunctions, and his death, which was conſequent thereupon 94 *to* 97

LET. XV. From —— to ——, acknowledging that the virtues of ſome *Heathens* were very ſurpriſing, and that his friend had in his letter ſet them in a very fair and advantageous light. In return, he ſends his friend incloſed a beautiful *hymn* to the *name* of JESUS, in oppoſition to the moſt accompliſhed of his *Pagan* heroes 97 *to* 99

LET. XVI. From Lady *Jane Grey* to Lord *Guilford Dudley*; a poetical farewel 100. 101

LET. XVII. From his *Lordſhip* to the *Princeſs*; an affectionate, poetical anſwer to the foregoing 101 *to* 103

LET. XVIII. From *Albanus* to Mrs ——, aſſuring the lady, that ſhe had wrought a wonderful reformation in him; and convinced him, that virtue was more than an empty name, was a ſacred reality, and that the goddeſs ſhone brighteſt when ſhe put on the *Royal form* of our late Queen *Caroline* 103. 104

LETTERS to *CLEORA*.

LET. I. FRom —— to *Cleora*, on the pleaſures of retirement 105. 106

LET. II. From —— to the ſame, complaining of the ſhortneſs of her laſt epiſtle 106. 107

LET. III. From —— to the ſame, excuſing her neglect of writing, ſince ſhe had no entertaining ſubject in her retirement to enlarge upon 107. 108

LET. IV. From —— to the ſame, acknowledging the favour of her laſt; and aſſuring her, that, in her opinion, death would have a diſmal view, if an immortality beyond it did not brighten the ſcene 108. 109

LET. V. From —— to the ſame, confeſſing that her reflexions

on

on death were very juſt; and that ſhe was glad to find her return to a ſubject which moſt of her ſex endeavoured to avoid 109. 110

LET. VI. From ——— to the ſame, aſſuring her, that ſhe had nothing remarkable to communicate, and that ſhe lived as retired as thoſe who ſleep in their graves 110. 111

LET. VII. From ——— to the ſame, aſſuring her, that as her thoughts on this world and the next are ſo juſt, ſhe compaſſionates her manner of life; concluding with this moral reflexion, That all our eager purſuits after earthly enjoyments are no more than the amuſing ourſelves with a vain ſucceſſion of ſhadows 112. 113

LET. VIII. From ——— to the ſame, acknowledging, that the principal motive of her writing is, to extort an anſwer, having nothing to entertain herſelf with, much leſs her friend 113

LETTERS to the AUTHOR.

LET. I. TO the *author* from *Cleora*, confeſſing, that tho' the thoughts of death might be ſerene, and agreeable enough to ſome; yet it was with reluctance ſhe parted with any thing here below, and dreaded to enter on a world unknown, from whence none return to tell us what they find it 114. 115

LET. II. To the ſame, diſcommending her living always a recluſe, and giving her an invitation to town 115. 116

LET. III. To the ſame, giving her an account how ſhe employs her time in her garden, and inviting her to her country-ſeat 117. 118

LET. IV. To the ſame, on the vanity of all ſublunary enjoyments 118. 119

LET. V. To the ſame, lamenting the loſs of my Lord ———, a ſincere friend, an honeſt man, and an agreeable companion; concluding with ſerious reflexions on the advantages of his change 119. 120

LET. VI. From *Iris* to *Clorinda*, aſſuring her, that the irregularity

larity of her paſſions is the true cauſe of her melancholy; that her thoughts and actions are inconſiſtent, ſince ſhe cannot forbear purſuing the pleaſures of the world, tho' ſhe knows them to be fleeting and worthleſs 120 *to* 122

LET. VII. From *Æmilia* to *Almira*, giving her an account of the death of the unhappy *Teraminta*, with the ſecret hiſtory of her criminal paſſion for *Alonzo*, one of her huſband's dependents 122 *to* 126

LET. VIII. From *Anaſtaſia* to the Lord ———, informing him of her retreat to a convent, to avoid his importunities 126. 127

LET. IX. From *Diana* to *Leonora*, giving her an account of her recovery from a tedious fit of ſickneſs, and a lively deſcription of the pleaſures of health; concluding with ſerious reflexions on the ſmall conſolations which earthly enjoyments afford us upon a death-bed 128. 129

LET. X. From *Bellamour* to *Lyſander*, giving him the ſecret hiſtory of *Roſella* and *Alphonſo* 129 *to* 134

See the continuation of her ſtory in Part II. *p.* 175.

LETTERS Moral and Entertaining,

PART II.

LET. I. TO Lady *Sophia*, from *Roſalinda*, a young Lady of Quality, relating the true occaſion of her flying from *France*, and leaving her father's houſe in the diſguiſe of a country-girl; of her arrival in *England* by the aſſiſtance of a faithful friend; of her progreſs to a country farmhouſe; of her reception there as a ſervant, in which is introduced a beautiful deſcription of a country-life; and laſtly, of her innocent amour with a beautiful modeſt youth, who lived in an adjacent village 135 *to* 141

LET. II. To the ſame, returning her Ladyſhip many thanks for all her ſolemn profeſſions of friendſhip, and her agreeable raillery

raillery on her new country gallant; and aſſuring her, that ſhe is as perfectly at eaſe, and contented with her new ſtation, as when ſhe lived in affluence, and the ſunſhine of a court 141 *to* 143

LET. III. To the ſame, aſſuring her of her firm reſolution to live for ever in her ſtate of obſcurity, rather than return to her father, and be obliged to renounce her religion 143 *to* 145
See the ſequel of her ſtory in the firſt letter of Part III.

LET. IV. From *Lavinia* to *Laurinda*, giving her an account of her viſit to *Cleomira*, and the effects of it 146. 147

LET. V. To *Belinda* from *Sylvia*, giving her the ſequel of her ſtory, related in the third letter of the firſt part of theſe *Moral Letters* 148 *to* 153

LET. VI. From *Æmilia* to *Leticia*, giving her an account of the death of *Amanda*; her character at large, and the little concern ſhe ſhewed in her illneſs for the things of another world 154 *to* 158

LET. VII. *Leticia*'s anſwer to *Æmilia*; in which ſhe firſt reflects on the unhappineſs of ſuch an education as *Amanda*'s, and then introduces a beautiful poem on *Solitude*, inſcribed to Mrs —— 158 *to* 161

LET. VIII. From *Æmilia* to *Leticia*, with thanks for her laſt ſeaſonable poem; an account of her brother's death, and of the alleviation of her grief by his appearance to her in an angelic form 162 *to* 164

LET. IX. *Leticia* to *Æmilia*; in which ſhe firſt gives an account of her being at the play, and ſeeing the *Princeſs Royal* there; then enters into the character of her Highneſs, which ſhe ſets in the faireſt light; and introduces at laſt a poem on *Beauty* 164 *to* 166

LET. X. To my Lord —— from *Lyſander*, giving a relation of the tragical end of his Atheiſtical *valet de chambre*; with a true copy of a penitential letter written by him after his death 166 *to* 172

LET. XI. To his Lordſhip from the ſame; in which is incloſed a poem, intitled, *The invocation* 172 *to* 175

LET. XII. The ſequel of the ſtory of *Roſella*, related in the tenth

tenth letter of the firſt part of *Letters Moral and Entertaining* 175 *to* 178

LET. XIII. From *Iſabella* to *Serena*, giving an account of her contracting an intimate acquaintance with *Semanthe*, who, contrary to her expectations, proved a falſe friend, and betrayed her moſt important ſecrets 178 *to* 180

LET. XIV. From *Melinda* to *Oriana*, giving an account of her departure from her brother's houſe, and the real occaſion of it; of her hiring herſelf to a merchant's lady, in order to conceal herſelf; and of the generous treatment ſhe met with from her maſter and miſtreſs 180 *to* 185

LET. XV. From —— to *Euſebius*, ſhewing a generous contempt of all ſublunary enjoyments, in the ſure and certain hopes of a bleſſed immortality 185 *to* 187

LET. XVI. The ſtory of *Olinda* and *Sophronia*, tranſlated from *Taſſo's Jeruſalem*, Book 2. 188 *to* 194

LET. XVII. From *Bellamour*, relating the ſequel of his paſſion for *Almeda*, mentioned in the eighth letter of the firſt part of *Letters Moral and Entertaining* 194 *to* 199

LET. XVIII. From *Hermione* to Lady *Mary*, her ſiſter, juſt before her death 199 *to* 201

LET. XIX. To —— from *Ariſtus*, giving an account of the ſudden death of his new bride *Erminia*, who was ſurpriſed with the fatal meſſage of death in the chapel, whilſt the ſacred rites were performing 201 *to* 203

LET. XX. From *Clerimont* to *Lycidas*, on the vanity of all ſublunary enjoyments, and the ſubſtantial pleaſures of an immortal ſtate 203 *to* 205

LET. XXI. To the Earl of —— from *Antonio*, acknowledging the raſhneſs and folly he was guilty of, in ſending his friend a challenge, and the generoſity of his adverſary in ſparing his life after the engagement 205 *to* 207

LET. XXII. To *Valerius* from an *Engliſh* merchant, giving an account of his redeeming one *Orramel*, the only ſon of a wealthy *Baſſa* in *Conſtantinople*, and of the friendly return made him by the grateful *Mahometan* 207 *to* 219

LET.

LETTERS Moral and Entertaining.

PART III.

LET. I. TO Lady *Sophia* from *Roſalinda*, with a continuation of her ſtory, related in the firſt, ſecond and third letters of the ſecond part of *Letters Moral and Entertaining* 211 *to* 215

LET. II. Another to the ſame, being the concluſion of the foregoing romance; in which is introduced a beautiful paſtoral dialogue on the works of the creation 215 *to* 220

LET. III. A third to the ſame, giving her an account of the death of her friend *Sally*, with an exact copy of the letter which ſhe wrote ſome few days before her deceaſe 220. 221

LET. IV. To *Carlos* from *Alcander*, relating his criminal engagement with the beautiful *Aſpaſia*, and the happy ſtop put to the execution of it by the receipt of a letter from *Philander* her huſband, his intimate friend, and generous benefactor 221 *to* 224

LET. V. Another to the ſame, with a beautiful tranſlation of *Taſſo's Inchanted foreſt* 225 *to* 230

LET. VI. From —— to *Albanus*, endeavouring to demonſtrate, that a virtuous life is preferable to all the allurements of ſenſe; in which is introduced a poem on *Happineſs* 230 *to* 234

LET. VII. From *Lindamor* to *Lucius*, with an ode on *Love* 234 *to* 237

LET. VIII. From *Sylviana*, giving an account of her manner of life before her marriage with the Earl of—— 237 *to* 242

LET. IX. From *Theophilus* to Mr *A*——, with a poetical meditation on *Death* 243. 244

LET. X.

LET. X. From *Ariel* to the Lady ——, on the wonders of the immortal world 244 *to* 246

LET. XI. From *Amintor* to *Euſebius*, giving an account of his marriage with the Lady *Diana* ——, and of her ſudden death, which blaſted all his promiſed happineſs; of his travels afterwards, in order to divert his melancholy, which proved ineffectual; concluding with ſeveral ſerious reflexions on the immutable ſtate of happineſs which attends the practice of virtue 246 *to* 250

LET. XII. Another to the ſame, with a divine poem on our *Saviour's nativity* 250. 251

LET. XIII. From *Lemira* to her brother in *France*, giving him a particular detail of her lover's misfortunes; concluding with a poem on the *divine veracity* 251 *to* 257

LET. XIV. From *Evander* to *Herminius*, with an ode on *Divine Love* 257 *to* 259

LET. XV. From *Polydore* to *Alonzo*, giving him an account of his accidental meeting with his old miſtreſs *Aurelia*; of her falſhood to him, and her criminal converſation with *Caſſander*; of his tyrannical treatment of her, and her ſincere repentance of her ill conduct 259 *to* 263

LET. XVI. From *Roſamond* to *Henry* II. a poetical expoſtulation with him on account of their criminal converſation. Imitated from *Drayton* 263 *to* 266

LET. XVII. To the Duke of *Suffolk* from *Mary* Queen of *France*. An imitation of *Drayton*'s epiſtle. The Princeſs *Mary*, *Henry* VIII.'s younger ſiſter, being in love with the Duke of *Suffolk*, was, for public reaſons, married to *Lewis* XII. of *France*, who died in ſix months after. The Queen being again at liberty, writes the following epiſtle to the Duke, her firſt lover 266 *to* 269

LET. XVIII. From *Penelope* to *Ulyſſes*; a tranſlation from *Ovid* 270 *to* 273

Six

Six LETTERS from LAURA to AURELIA.

LET. I. FRom *Laura* to *Aurelia*; firſt inveighing againſt the pleaſures of a rural life, then repreſenting her brother as an *infidel*; and giving her an account of his ſyſtem of tranſmigration; concluding with her diſlike of his ſcheme, and her unwillingneſs to renounce her proſpects of an immortal ſtate 273 *to* 276

LET. II. To the ſame, giving an account of her brother's criminal paſſion for *Charlotte*, his peculiar treatment of her, and her deteſtation both of him and his impious converſation 277 *to* 279

LET. III. To the ſame, giving her an account of her being reconciled to a rural life, and of her adventure with the *handſome hermit* 279 *to* 281

LET. IV. To the ſame, giving her a relation of a ſecond viſit which ſhe paid to the *handſome hermit*, in company with her brother's miſtreſs, the diſconſolate *Charlotte*; and the effects which his virtuous deportment had upon her; of her ſincere repentance for her paſt follies, and her earneſt ſolicitations to be freed from the power of her licentious lover 282 *to* 285

LET. V. To the ſame, giving her an account of *Charlotte*'s ſincere repentance, and her uncle's reception of her into his favour and protection thereupon. In the concluſion ſhe gives her a continuation of her conference with the *handſome hermit*, who foretels his approaching fate, and endeavours to convince her, that the hopes of *Chriſtianity* are no deluſions 285 *to* 288

LET. VI. To the ſame, relating the death of *Philocles*, the *handſome hermit*, according to his own prediction; and of the important effects of it, *viz.* her abſolute converſion from her former infidelity, and her firm belief of a life everlaſting 288 *to* 290

Amoret to *Coriſca*. A poetical epiſtle from the infernal regions, to convince the fair licentious unbeliever of the certainty of a future ſtate, and to forewarn her of the torments prepared for thoſe who die without a ſincere contrition and ſorrow for their ſins 290 *to* 292

LETTERS

FROM THE

DEAD to the LIVING.

LETTER I.

To the Earl of R——, *from Mr* ———, *who had promiſed to appear to him after his death.*

THIS will find you, my Lord, confirmed in your infidelity, by your late diſappointment. It was not in my power to give you the evidence of a future ſtate which you deſired, and I had raſhly promiſed; but ſince this engagement was a ſecret to every mortal but ourſelves, you muſt be aſſured, that this comes from your deceaſed friend, whoſe friendſhip you ſee has reached beyond the grave.

In my laſt ſickneſs, we fixed on the time and place of my appearance. You was punctual to the appointment: for tho' I was not permitted to make myſelf viſible, I had the curioſity to know if you had the reſolution to attend the ſolemnity of a viſit from the dead. The hour was come; the clock from a neighbouring ſteeple ſtruck *one*; no human voice was heard to break the awful ſilence; the moon and ſtars ſhone clear in their midnight-ſplendor, and glimmered through the trees, which in lofty rows led to the centre of a grove, where I was engaged to meet you.

I ſaw you enter the walks, with a careleſs incredulous air; not the leaſt concern or expectation appeared in your looks; as if you came there only in regard to your own word, and a ſort of reſpect to my memory. However, the calmneſs of the night induced you to walk till the morning began to break; when you retired, ſinging an

idle ſong you had got out of the *Fairy tales*. By the gaiety of your temper, you ſeemed pleaſed, my Lord, with a new proof againſt a future life, and happy to find yourſelf (as you concluded) on a level with the beaſts that periſh.——A glorious advantage! and worthy of your triumph!

But we have ſo often diſcourſed on this ſubject, that I would not tire you with the repetition of any thing paſt; only once more to make way to your reaſon, by moving your paſſions, in recollecting the manner of your brother's death, which was all a demonſtration of the immortality of the ſoul, and to what heights of fortitude that proſpect could raiſe the heart of man, at the hour of terror, and in the jaws of death.

With what a ready compoſure did he endure the violence of his diſtemper! with what conviction and full aſſurance expect the reward of his piety! with what calmneſs, with what a graceful reſignation did he receive the ſentence of death, when (at his importunity) the phyſicians told him there were no hopes of his recovery! "Then I have but a few weary ſteps, [he replied], and "the journey of life will be finiſhed."

This was not a time for affectation. All was open undiſſembled goodneſs, and a true greatneſs of mind. Nothing elſe could have ſupported him, when every circumſtance of life conſpired to allure him back to life, to deepen the ſhadows of the grave, and make the King of Terrors more terrible.

There was not, my Lord, among the race of men, a more lovely and agreeable perſon than your brother. His marriage was juſt concluded with the charming *Cleora*; he had juſt finiſhed a noble ſeat and fine gardens to receive her. When he was near death, ſhe came at his requeſt to take a laſt and ſad farewel. Angels might have ſorrowed to ſee tears in the brighteſt eyes on earth, while her tenderneſs for him would have diſguiſed her anguiſh. This, with the ſight of a fond young ſiſter, fainting in her woman's arms; your aged father ſitting near, ſilent and ſtupid with his grief: what could ſupport the mind of man in ſuch complicated diſtreſs! The accompliſhed youth, who had all that was gentle and humane in his diſpoſition, muſt have betrayed ſome weakneſs,

weakneſs, if he had not been aſſiſted by a power ſuperior to nature. But how equal, how ſteady was his mind! how becoming, how graceful his whole behaviour! Never was the laſt, the cloſing part of life, performed with more decency and grandeur. His reaſon was clear and elevated; and his words were the very language of immortality, and excited at the ſame time both *pity* and *envy* in thoſe that were near him.

When the cold ſweats hung on his brows, and his breath and ſpeech failed, joy ſtruggled thro' the decay of nature, and a heavenly ſmile ſat on his face; a ſmile that at once compelled our tears, and accuſed us of weakneſs in them.

You, my Lord, attended him to the laſt moment of life: and when I preſſed this argument of a future ſtate, you confeſſed, that tho' you thought religion a deluſion, it was the moſt agreeable deluſion in the world; and that men who flattered themſelves with thoſe gay viſions, had much the advantage of thoſe that ſaw nothing before them but a gloomy uncertainty, or the dreadful hope of an annihilation.

From this uncertainty I was very ſolicitous to draw you, while I was in a mortal ſtate; but I have now a more ardent deſire to convince you, tho' I cannot obtain the permiſſion to give you that evidence you requeſted. However, this letter may ſatisfy you that I am in a ſtate of exiſtence; nor is an apparition from the dead a greater miracle, than a variety of objects that daily ſurround you, and owe the loſs of their effect to your familiarity with them.

Happy minds in this ſuperior ſtate are ſtill concerned for the welfare of mortals, and make a thouſand kind viſits to their friends; to whom, if the laws of the immaterial worlds did not forbid, it would be eaſy to make themſelves viſible, by the ſplendor of their own vehicles, and the command they have on the powers of material things, and the organs of ſight. It often ſeems a miracle to us, that you do not perceive us; for we are not abſent from you by *places*, but by the different conditions of the *ſtates* we are in.

You'll find this in your cloſet, and may be aſſured it comes from

Your conſtant
and immortal friend,

CLERIMONT.

LETTER II.

From a Gentleman who died at Conſtantinople, *to his friend in* England, *giving him an account of the manner of his death.*

YOur not hearing from me, my dear *Beville*, has given you too many diſmal apprehenſions about the manner of my death; and the engagements of a generous friendſhip, which are not extinguiſhed with the breath of life, oblige me to give you this ſatisfaction.

I made a longer ſtay at *Conſtantinople* than I intended; and there it pleaſed Heaven, that I ſhould reſign my life; which for ſome months gradually declined; but without any violent or painful diſorder, or indeed the leaſt apprehenſion that my diſtemper was fatal. But my days were numbered; and when the deſtined hour drew near, after a ſleepleſs night, I roſe with the ſun; and, as I had never been ſo ill as to confine myſelf, I ſought ſome refreſhment in one of thoſe delicious gardens that adorn the ſhore of the *Boſphorus*.

After a ſhort walk I found my ſpirits ſinking; and retiring to a cypreſs ſhade, I threw myſelf on a flowery bank for ſome refreſhment. A gentle ſlumber ſoon cloſed my eyes; which was thrice broken by what I then thought an imaginary call. The voice perfectly reſembled the charming *Almeria*'s, whoſe death, you know, was the occaſion of my travels. I was now perfectly awake, and liſtening to hear the gentle ſummons again; but found I had neither ſtrength to riſe, nor power to call aſſiſtance. An icy coldneſs ſtopped the ſprings of life, and, after a little ſtruggle, my ſpirit got unburthened of its clay; the curtain fell, and the inviſible world appeared. The firſt gentle ſpirit that welcomed me to theſe new regions, was the lovely *Almeria*. But how dazzling!

dazzling! how divinely fair! Ecſtaſy was in her eyes, and inexpreſſible pleaſure in every ſmile! her mien and aſpect more ſoft and propitious than ever was feigned by poets of their goddeſs of beauty and love. What was airy fiction *there*, was *here* all tranſporting reality. With an inimitable grace ſhe received me into her æthereal chariot, which was ſparkling ſapphire, ſtudded with gold. It rolled with a ſpontaneous motion along the heavenly plains, and ſtopped at the Morning-Star, our deſtined habitation. But how ſhall I deſcribe this fair, this fragrant, this inchanting land of love! the delectable vales and flowery lawns; the myrtle ſhades and roſy bowers; the bright caſcades and cryſtal rivulets rolling over orient pearls and ſands of gold, which here ſpread their ſilent waves into broad tranſparent lakes, ſmooth as the face of heaven, and there break with rapid force through arching rocks of diamond and purple amethyſt. Plants of immortal verdure creep up the ſparkling cliffs, and adorn the proſpect with unſpeakable variety.

Oh, my *Beville!* could I lead you through the luxurious bowers and ſoft receſſes where Pleaſure keeps its eternal feſtivals, and revels with guiltleſs and unmoleſted freedom! Whatever can raiſe deſire, whatever can give delight, whatever can ſatisfy the ſoul in all the boundleſs capacities of joy, is found here! every wiſh is repleniſhed with full draughts of vital pleaſure, ſuch as elevate angelic minds, and gratify the nobleſt faculties of immortal ſpirits. Oh, *Beville!* my *Almeria* is as much ſuperior to her former ſelf here, as I thought her ſuperior to the reſt of her ſex upon earth.

ALTAMONT.

LETTER III.

To the Counteſs of ———, from her only ſon, who died when he was two years old.

YOur grief is an allay to my happineſs. The only ſentiment my infant-ſtate was conſcious of, was a fondneſs for you; which was then pure inſtinct and na-

tural ſympathy, but is now gratitude and filial affection. As ſoon as my ſpirit was releaſed from its uneaſy confinement, I found myſelf an active and reaſonable being; I was tranſported at the advantage and ſuperior manner of my exiſtence. The firſt reflection I made, was on my lovely benefactor; for I knew you in that relation in my infant-ſtate. But I was ſurpriſed to ſee you weeping over the little breathleſs form from which I thought myſelf ſo happily delivered, as if you had lamented my eſcape. The fair proportion, the agility, the ſplendor of the new vehicle that my ſpirit now informed, was ſo bleſſed an exchange, that I wondered at your grief; for I was ſo little acquainted with the difference of material and immaterial bodies, that I thought myſelf as viſible to your ſight as you was to mine. I was exceedingly moved at your tears; but was ignorant why; unleſs becauſe your's was the moſt beautiful face next to my guardian angel's I had ever ſeen, and that you reſembled ſome of the gay forms that uſed to recreate my guitleſs ſlumbers, and ſmile on me in gentle dreams. I was then ignorant of your maternal relation to me; but remembered that you had been my refuge in all the little diſtreſſes of which I had but a faint notion. I left you unwillingly in the height of your calamity, to follow my radiant guide to a place of tranquillity and joy; where I met thouſands of happy ſpirits of my own order, who informed me of the hiſtory of my native world; for whoſe inhabitants I have a peculiar benevolence, and cannot help intereſting myſelf in their welfare. But as I never diſcerned between good and evil, nor experienced the motives that governed the race of men, I am, I confeſs, aſtoniſhed at their conduct, and find their joys and ſorrows to be all ſtrange and unaccountable. I have made viſits to the lower world ſince my deceaſe. The firſt that I made, was from a tender curioſity to know if you was ſatisfied with the diſpoſal of Heaven in my early fate: but I was ſurpriſed to find, after ſeveral months were paſt, your grief oppreſſed every thought, and clouded all the joys of your life; which made me very inquiſitive into my own hiſtory. I aſked the celeſtial who was your attendant, why I was ſo much lamented, and of what conſequence my life would have been to the public,

or

or my own family, ſince thoſe fair eyes were yet drowned in tears for one that had made ſuch a ſhort and inſignificant appearance below? As for the public, the gentle miniſter told me there was a hazard; I might have proved a bleſſing or curſe; but that I was the only hope of an illuſtrious family, and heir to a vaſt eſtate and diſtinguiſhed title; and pointing to a coat of arms, told me *that* was the badge of my dignity; the noble ſeat we had in view, with the gardens, fields, the woods and parks that ſurrounded it, were all my entailed poſſeſſion. A goodly poſſeſſion! I replied, and proper for the four-footed animals that I behold feeding on the verdant paſture! But of what uſe theſe fields and woods had been to one that had an immortal ſpirit, I cannot conceive. And as for a title, what happineſs could an airy ſyllable, an empty ſound, bring with it? The coat of arms I took for ſuch a toy, that it burleſque had not been beneath the dignity of an angel, I ſhould have thought the mentioning it a ridicule on mortal men. I cannot conceive wherein the charm, the gratification of theſe things conſiſt. If I were poſſeſſed of the whole earthly globe, what uſe could I make of this groſs element, the dregs of the creation? I have no dependence on water, or fire, or earth, or air. It is unintelligible to me, that hills and valleys, trees and rivers, the mines and caverns under their feet, any more than the clouds that fly over their heads, ſhould be the wealth of reaſonable creatures. They may keep their poſſeſſions unenvied by me; I am glad I did not live long enough to make ſo wrong a judgment, nor to acquire a reliſh for ſuch low enjoyments. I am ſo little concerned for the loſs of ſuch an inheritance, that if the black prince of the airy regions claimed my ſhare, I would not diſpute his title, though he is my averſion, and your foe.

So ſuperior, Madam, are my preſent circumſtances to thoſe of the greateſt monarch under the ſun, that all earthly grandeur is pageantry and farce, compared to the real, the innate dignity which I now poſſeſs. I am advanced to celeſtial glory, and triumph in the heights of immortal life and pleaſure, whence pity falls on the kings of the earth.

If

If you could conceive my happineſs, inſtead of the mournful ſolemnity with which you interred me, you would have celebrated my funeral rites with ſongs and feſtivals. Inſtead of the thoughtleſs thing you lately ſmiled on and careſſed, I am now in the perfection of my being, in the elevation of reaſon; inſtead of a little extent of land, and the propriety of ſo much ſpace to breathe in, I tread the ſtarry pavement, make the circuit of the ſkies, and breathe the air of paradiſe. I am ſecure of eternal duration, and independent but on the Almighty, whom I love and adore, as the fountain of my being and bleſſedneſs.

Pardon me, Madam, 'tis you now ſeem the infant, and I repay you that ſuperior regard and tenderneſs which you lately beſtowed on me.

NARCISSUS.

LETTER IV.

To my Lord ———, *from a young Lady who was in a convent at* Florence.

MY Lord, finding materials in your cloſet, I took the opportunity of your abſence to give you this intelligence of my death. The hand will convince you that it comes from your once-loved *Ethelinda*.

I lived but a few weeks after you left *Italy*, ſuch was the exceſs of my grief; though a ſtrict modeſty ſtill forced me to conceal my unhappy paſſion from the moſt intimate companion I had. After I had diſcovered it to you, I durſt confeſs the guilty ſecret to none but the compaſſionate and forgiving powers above; who aſſiſted my weakneſs, and confirmed my reſolution never to comply with any of thoſe ſchemes you propoſed to free me from my confinement. You had indeed convinced me, that the vow I had made was raſh and uncommanded! But, oh! it was paſt; ſaints and angels heard it; the all-ſeeing ſkies were invoked to witneſs the chaſte engagement; it was ſealed above, and entered in the records of heaven. Thus hopeleſs was my paſſion! perjury and ſacrilege ſtood in all their horrors before me, ruin

ruin and eternal perdition were betwixt us. And yet, that I loved you, my Lord, I had too often ſubſcribed to that ſoft confeſſion to leave you any doubt of it. Nor was the tender frailty without excuſe, if all the merit man could boaſt, if every grace that nature could give, or gentle art improve, deſerved diſtinction. It had been a crime to have been inſenſible in any circumſtance but mine.—Strange circumſtance! that could make it virtue to look coldly on you.

There was the emphaſis of my miſery: Mine was a heart devoted to ſuperior ardours, and ſacred to heaven alone; that heaven which is my impartial judge and witneſs how ſincerely I ſtrove to blot you from my ſoul. But neither reaſon, nor the niceſt ſenſe of honour, nor even devotion, could aſſiſt me; ſtill you returned on my imagination triumphant in all your charms. Hopeleſs of the conqueſt, I gave myſelf up to grief and deſpair, reſolving never to attempt my eſcape from the holy retreat to which my vows had confined me, but rather to fall a victim to the ſacred names of Chaſtity and Truth. Heaven accepted the ſacrifice; and death, my kind deliverer, at once releaſed me from miſery and mortality; the cryſtal gates opened a ſpacious entrance, and the bleſſed immortals received me into the manſions of life and bliſs.

Whatever was feigned of *Elyſian* fields, and *Cyprian* groves, is here without deluſion ſurpaſſed. Theſe are the imperial ſeats, the native dominions of Love. Here his holy torch flames out with propitious ſplendor, and his golden ſhafts are dipt in immortal joys. Here are no vows that tear us from our wiſhes, no conflict betwixt paſſion and virtue: what we like we admire; what we admire we enjoy; nor is it more our happineſs than commendation ſo to do.

That unhappy paſſion, which was my torment and crime, is now my glory and my boaſt. Nothing ſelfiſh or irregular, nothing that needs reſtraint or diſguiſe, mingles with the noble ardor; 'tis all calm and beneficent, becoming the dignity of reaſon, and the grandeur of an immortal mind, and is as laſting as its eſſence. When the lamps of heaven are quenched, when the ſun has burnt out its ſplendor, this divine principle ſhall

ſhine

ſhine with undiminiſhed luſtre, the joy and triumph of the heavenly nations. The ſubſtance of love, my Lord, dwells in heaven, its ſhadow only is to be found upon earth.

ETHELINDA.

LETTER V.

To ——————

YOU remember, as we were on a clear ſummer-evening gazing on the beauty of the ſtars, I promiſed, if you ſurvived me, to give you an account of the planetary worlds, and their inhabitants. I have not made half the tour of the ſkies; but will, if I can, deſcribe to you the laſt of theſe novelties in which I entertained myſelf. It was in a region immenſe ſpaces diſtant from that ſyſtem which is enlightened by your ſun, and created numberleſs ages before the foundations of the earth were laid, and the meaſure thereof deſcribed before the day-ſpring knew its place, and the bounds of darkneſs were determined. Before man was formed of the ground, and the Almighty breathed into him a living ſoul; an unmeaſurable duration before this, the unlimited Creator had made and peopled millions of glorious worlds. The inhabitants of this which I am deſcribing, ſtood their probation, and are confirmed in their original rectitude; but will never be admitted into the empyrean heaven, being incapable of that ſupreme degree of happineſs which angels and the ſpirits of juſt men attain. However, they are exempt from all evil, bleſſed to the height of their faculties and conceptions, and are privileged with immortality. Their reſidence may properly be called *the inchanted world.* Whatever you have heard fabled of fairy ſcenes, of vocal groves, and palaces riſing to magic ſounds, is all real here, and performed by the eaſy and natural operations of theſe active ſpirits. I have in an inſtant ſeen palaces aſcend to a majeſtic height, ſparkling as the ſtars, and tranſparent as the unclouded æther. I might deſcribe them like the courtly prophet: *Their walls were fair colours, their foundation ſapphire, the windows of agate, and the gates of carbuncle.*

carbuncle. Their materials here are all glittering and refined; not, like the earthly globe, dark and heavy. Theſe æthereals are the niceſt judges of ſymmetry and proportion; and, by the diſpoſition of light and ſhade, and the mixture of a thouſand dazzling colours, form the moſt charming proſpects. They have ſuch a command and knowledge of the powers of nature, that in an inſtant they raiſe a variety of ſylvan ſcenes, and carry the perſpective through verdant avenues and flowery walks to an unmeaſurable length; while living fountains caſt up their ſilver ſpouts, and form glittering arches among the trees, of growth and verdure not to be expreſſed.

They are acquainted with all the utmoſt myſteries of ſound, and are poſſeſſed with the very ſoul of harmony. Art is theirs in all its changing notes, its blandiſhments and graces. Whatever Nature can boaſt in her wild licentious charms, is governed by them. The winding vales, the ſtreams and groves, breathe muſic at their command; the nightingale and dying ſwan ſeem to complain to gentle zephyrs whiſpering through the trees; while a thouſand airy ſongſters warble to the meaſured fall of high caſcades; which by intervals ſinking into a deep ſilence, after a graceful pauſe, ſhrill recorders and ſilver trumpets ſound; while harmleſs thunders roll above, and break with a glorious ſolemnity: ſtill the bleſsful tempeſt riſes, and ſwells the mind to ſacred grandeur and ſeraphic elevation; till ſubdued and melted into ſoftneſs by the melody of tuneful reeds, warbling lutes, and ſweet inchanting voices of the *Lydian* ſtrain.

The language of this charming region is perfectly muſical and elegant, and becoming the fair inhabitants, who are freſh and roſy as the opening morning, clear as the meridian light, and fragrant as the breath of jeſſamin, or new-blown roſes. How exquiſitely proportioned their ſhapes! their aſpect how tranſporting! how gentle, how charming beyond all the race of mortal men! Never did the eye-lids of the morning open on ſuch perfection; never did the ſun, ſince firſt it journeyed through the ſkies, behold ſuch beauty; nor can human fancy, in its moſt inſpired flights, conceive ſuch amiable wonders.

Perhaps,

Perhaps, in all my planetary rambles, I ſhall not be able to give you an account of any objects more ſurpriſing: but, while I am permitted, I ſhall continue my intelligence to the moſt agreeable friend I had on earth; and be aſſured, when you are releaſed from mortality, you will meet, in ſpite of diſtance of time and place, (thoſe mortal foes to love upon earth),

Your conſtant and unchanged

JUNIUS.

LETTER VI.

To ———

MY dear ſiſter, though the engagements of nature are cancelled, the ſuperior obligations of virtue remain in their full force. You have been faithful to my memory, and the ſtricteſt rules of piety; though it has proved of fatal conſequence to the unhappy man who was lately my huſband, and by that relation a brother to you. With inward grief and compaſſion I ſaw the guilty inclination; but never uttered the leaſt complaint, nor gave him one uneaſy moment. I knew your mind as faultleſs as your form, and ſaw you governed in all your conduct by conſcious honour and unblemiſhed virtue. Envy itſelf could not have reproached you with the leaſt deviation from modeſty and truth: nor was the promiſe I would have extorted from the guilty youth on my death-bed, the effect of jealouſy; but a kind deſign to reclaim him, and free you from his importunity, if I could have engaged him, as I deſired, not to converſe with you after my deceaſe. But he was ſincere enough to refuſe me; and as ſoon as a ſlight formality would ſuffer him, he purſued his inceſtuous paſſion. Your obſtinate repulſes have at laſt the tragical effect I expected. From the moment that he heard the day of your marriage with the illuſtrious *Montandre* was ſet, he reſolved on the unnatural fact; and never was ſelf-murder performed in a more calm and deliberate manner. He ſpent part of the evening with two of his friends, men of wit and learning; his diſcourſe with them was all intended to

prove

prove the right a man has to diſpoſe of his life, and put an end to his being, when it was rather his burthen than happineſs. He returned to his houſe in a more early hour than uſual; and retiring to his chamber, called for a young and only daughter that I had left him. Taking her in his arms, while the lovely infant ſmiled on him, tears dropped from his eyes: when he would have bleſſed it, the unbelieving prayer faultered on his tongue; and delivering the child to its nurſe, he ordered his ſervants to deny him to all company. As ſoon as he was alone, he wrote that moving letter which you received. When he had finiſhed and ſealed it, he took a *Lucretius* from the table, and read and pauſed by intervals. At laſt, looking on his watch, juſt at *two* he faſtened his chamber-door, and drew his ſword, repeating the following lines, which I wiſh had never been writ, as, I aſſure you, does the author of them too.

——— *Here's quick relief*
To all thy vain imaginary grief!
For thou ſhalt ſleep, and never wake again,
And quitting life, ſhalt quit thy living pain.
The worſt that can befal thee, meaſur'd right,
Is a ſound ſlumber, and a long good-night.

Then directing the point exactly to his heart, he fell on his ſword, and immediately expired; and left a tender orphan friendleſs and expoſed. This is the motive of my writing to you, that you would take the charge of her education, and protect her infant-innocence. Be ſure to perform this generous office, as you would proſper, and be yourſelf protected in any of the calamities of human life. By deſiring you to make all poſſible proviſion for her happineſs, I preſent you with an opportunity of promoting your own.

AMANDA.

LETTER. VII.

To ———

MY dear *Æmilia*, it will be impoſſible for me to give you the intelligence I promiſed from the inviſible

regions, unleſs I could tranſlate the language of paradiſe into that of mortals: for here are a thouſand beauties unrevealed, and a thouſand delights un-named among the race of men. We drink at the fountain-head of happineſs, and bathe in the rivers of immortal pleaſure; the ſprightly hours dance along, crowned with love, and unutterable ecſtaſy.

You were witneſs to my dying agony; I ſaw your laſt kind tears, and gave up my breath in your arms. But how changed was the ſcene in a moment! from the gloom and horror of a death-bed, to the ſmiles and ſongs of angels, who conducted me to the æthereal heights! A thouſand dazzling wonders met my view; the heavens in pomp unfolded their glories; the paradiſe of God opened before me in all its bleſsful and tranſporting ſcenes! The happy groves ſtood crowned with unfading verdure; the lucid currents danced along over ſands of gold; the charming bowers diſplayed their ever-blooming pride, and breathed ambroſia; the palaces of the heavenly powers aſcended with exquiſite magnificence, ſparkling far beyond all the glories of the lower ſkies, and reſounded with the voice of feſtivity and joy.

The firſt gentle ſpirit that welcomed me to theſe happy manſions, was your charming brother, gay as a cherubin. The heavenly loves and graces triumphed in all his form; vital pleaſure danced in his eyes; life and celeſtial bloom ſat ſmiling on his face; a wreath of unfading flowers circled his head; and a golden lute was in his hand, whoſe harmony joined to his melting voice, far ſurpaſſed all deſcription. That tender innocent paſſion I had long conceived for him, kindled at the firſt interview, and has taken eternal poſſeſſion of my ſoul.

But how ſhall I make you ſenſible of what an angel's flowing ſong, in all the pomp of heavenly harmony, would not fully deſcribe! In what figures of celeſtial eloquence ſhall I relate the loves of immortal ſpirits; or tell you the height, the extent, the fulneſs of their bliſs! All the ſoft engagements on earth, the tender ſympathies, and the moſt holy union that nature knows, are but faint ſimilitudes for the ſanctity and grandeur of theſe divine enjoyments. Hope and languiſhing expectation are no more, and all deſire is loſt in full and compleat

compleat fruition. Love reigns in eternal triumph! here it governs every heart, and dwells on every tongue.

They tune their golden harps to the great name
Of Love, immortal Love, their darling theme.
Ten thouſand echoes through the lightſome plains
Repeat the clear, the ſweet melodious ſtrains.
The fields rejoice, the fragrant groves around
Bloſſom afreſh at their inchanting ſound.
The heav'n of heav'ns from dazzling heights above
Returns the name, and hails the pow'r of Love.

But, oh! when the fair face of eternal Love unveils its original glories, and appears in the perfection of uncreated beauty, how wondrous, how ineffable the viſion! Fulneſs of joy is in his preſence, rapture and inexpreſſible ecſtaſy: the faireſt ſeraph ſtops his lute, and with a graceful pauſe confeſſes the ſubject too great for his moſt exalted ſtrain. How impetuouſly do the ſtreams of immortal joy roll in, and enlarge the faculties of every heavenly mind!

Ye ſacred myſteries, unrevealed to men: ye glories, unprofaned by mortal eyes, forgive the bold attempt that would deſcribe you! — The only deſcription that mortals can receive of you is, that you are not to be deſcribed.

DELIA.

LETTER VIII.

To ———

WHen you had juſt made me happy, and rewarded the moſt tender paſſion in the world with the poſſeſſion of your charms, I was compelled to make a voyage to *Spain*. You ſaw the inward ſtruggle of my ſoul, and that I muſt ſuffer the anguiſh of death in leaving you, when you ſurpriſed me with the unexpected generous offer, to follow me through all the dangers of the ſeas. Charmed with the propoſal, I took you at your word, and raſhly ventured my darling treaſure to the hazards of a voyage. I loſt my life in your defence againſt an *Algerine* corſair. The cauſe was juſt, and met

with its approbation in the ſeats of peace and happineſs. For my own lot, I could not wiſh it more advantageous; and for your's, ſuch virtue in diſtreſs will be the peculiar care of Heaven. The barbarian that made you his prize, treated you with an unaccuſtomed gentleneſs: nor has the illuſtrious Baſſa, that ranſomed you out of his power at an immenſe price, given you the leaſt occaſion of reproach. In the height of his paſſion he has always obſerved even the ſanctity of the Chriſtian rules, and treated you with a ſubmiſſion very different from the principles and cuſtoms of his country. Though he has courted you to increaſe the number of his wives, he ſeems to have ſuch an abſolute command of himſelf, even in the warmth of his youthful deſires, that you need fear no violence from the generous infidel. But ſhould the worſt you imagine arrive, Heaven has a thouſand ways to protect your innocence. Depend on that; and let not the extravagance of your grief perſuade you, that it is lawful to free yourſelf by the fatal opiate which you keep for that deſign. The heavenly *genii* that attend you, have made a thouſand impreſſions on your ſleeping fancy, to warn you from the deſperate attempt. Sometimes you have been led through the deſolate ſhades where unhappy ghoſts complain; the gloomy caverns, the abodes of eternal horror, have been opened to your view; ſometimes the rewards of patience and conſtant virtue have diſplayed their glories to your pleaſed imagination; and by the ſoft inſpiring whiſpers of celeſtial beings, your reſtleſs thoughts have been compoſed, while the realms of joy have unfolded their delights in viſionary proſpects to you: by heavenly ſcenes and gentle ſlumbers, your griefs were calmed, the tempeſt of your paſſions ſuſpended. Then quietly attend the event, and the gentle *Calicara* will find a way to free you, Till *Abubecar* ſaw you, ſhe was his darling ſlave; and as he is handſome to admiration, ſhe loved and renounced the Chriſtian faith for him: but ſtill the fair apoſtate in her heart adores the name which her tongue has denied. This, tho' you are her rival, fills her ſoul with the ſofteſt compaſſion for you, and makes her abhor the taſk that her inſolent maſter has impoſed, of perſuading you to quit the poſſeſſion of the heavenly truth, which is your happineſs

and

and glory. She is ſo far from giving you that infernal counſel, that ſhe has with tears and intreaties perſuaded you to die, rather than abandon your glorious hopes, and title to immortality: nor will ſhe reſt, till ſhe has by ſome means or other ſecured you from *Abubecar*'s importunity; of complying with which ſhe has experienced the deluſive and bitter conſequence.

Your coldneſs and averſion, with the aſcendant her wit and vivacity has on his temper, will ſoon recover the youthful wanderer, and reſtore her to an abſolute empire over him; and then you are ſecure of a guiltleſs protection, till you can give your friends in *England* intelligence of your circumſtances; who will ſoon pay your ranſom; which no one can for virtue loſt.

In the mean time, if you love my memory, moderate the exceſs of your grief for my death; which, however tragical it appeared, was glorious, and happy for me. I fell in the ardor of a brave action, in the defence of your beauty and liberty, and my own life. The wounds I received, gave a free paſſage to my ſoul; which took its flight with no other regret, but that of parting with you, if it may be called a ſeparation; for I have been your conſtant attendant in my inviſible ſtate, your unſeen companion in the beautiful walks and bowers where you ſo frequently ſpend your hours of retirment. I ſhould with pleaſure hear you repeat my name, as I often do, and in the ſofteſt language expreſs the conſtancy of a virtuous paſſion, could you reſtrain thoſe floods of tears, and be more reſigned to the will of Heaven. But let this aſſure you, that I am in the height of happineſs; and when your life is finiſhed, we ſhall meet to part no more: which circumſtance, though you, through your partiality for me, may too highly value, believe me, you will find it by much the ſmalleſt bleſſing of this place.

AMINTOR.

LETTER IX.

To SYLVIA.

FRom the fragrant bowers, the ever-blooming fields, and lightſome regions of the Morning-Star, I wiſh health and every bleſſing to the charming *Sylvia*, the bleſſing of the earth!

I have a ſecret to reveal to you, of the greateſt importance to your preſent and future happineſs. You are as much a ſtranger to your own rank and circumſtances, as I was to mine till I came here; where I met a fair ſpirit, who informed me, that when ſhe was a mortal, I was her ſon, and not the heir of the Earl of ———, as was ſuppoſed; and that the Lord ——— is your own brother. It is neceſſary that you ſhould know, and diſcover this to him; which will prevent that innocent fondneſs which he now indulges for you, from growing into a guilty paſſion.

You have been educated only as a dependent on the Noble family you are in, and as a companion to the young Ladies, who are really your ſiſters. The myſtery is this. My Lord your father had ſeveral daughters ſucceſſively by the Counteſs your mother, but no lawful heir; which made him fond of a natural ſon that he had by a miſtreſs. His affection for him was ſo extravagant, that he contrived to ſettle his eſtate on him. This gave your mother ſuch anxiety, that her jealouſy and averſion to the youth put her on this raſh deſign, when ſhe was with child, to exchange it, if it proved a daughter. My mother, who was married out of her ſervice, and in whom ſhe could entirely confide, was with child of me at the ſame time. Their time of delivery was very near together. My mother had a ſon, and you proved a daughter. The affair was managed with ſuch dexterity, that I was exchanged, and paſſed without ſuſpicion for the Counteſs's ſon; and you was received by my mother, and ſuppoſed to be her daughter. Within a year the Counteſs had really a ſon; but ſhe dying as ſoon as ſhe was delivered, the ſecret was undiſcovered.

I lived a guiltleſs impoſtor till I was ten years old; when a ſudden decay withered my tender bloom. But,

as

as I had been bred in the ſtricteſt notions of piety and truth, without any childiſh prejudices or ſlaviſh fears, I expected my approaching end, whilſt Death made his advances armed with a golden-headed dart. I had no notions of miſery; all my expectations were bright, tho' imperfect, of ſome paradiſe beyond the grave; and cloſing my eyes, I fell aſleep, and waked to immortal life and happineſs. All that was paſt, looked like a dream, like an airy image, of I know not what. Some notion I had of a God, and my dependence on him; but how different from the illumination that broke in on my ſoul the moment it threw off its mortal veil! It was then I began to live and reflect; it was then I found myſelf a rational being, and looked back with contempt on the inſignificant part I had been acting. The memory of my original follies, the childiſh baubles and toys that had juſt before been my diverſion, would have given me ſome confuſion, if my caſe had been ſingular: but I met thouſands of gay ſpirits newly releaſed, who had performed their ſhort taſk, and finiſhed their trifling farces of life; at the ſame time tranſported at their preſent ſuperior circumſtances, they made the moſt agreeable reflexions on their paſt ſtate. What grandeur, what vivacity, what enlargement of their intellectual powers! how ſparkling, how reſembling the angels of God, their forms! while a perfect conſciouſneſs, and exact remembrance of what they were but a few moments paſt, raiſed their joy and gratitude to the height, and recommended heaven itſelf.

There was one circumſtance in my early death that makes me look on it as a peculiar favour, in that I was removed, by the juſt diſpenſation of Heaven, from the poſſeſſion of what is, in the ſtricteſt equity, your brother's right. This reflexion, from a principle of juſtice and truth, gave me an ineffable ſatisfaction; ſince if I had lived, I had been the unhappy, though innocent uſurper of a rank and inheritance to which I had not the leaſt real title. This, with a thouſand other advantages, makes me bleſs the period that freed me from mortality; that happy moment that delivered me from ignorance and vanity; from the errors, the guilt, the miſeries of human life; of which tho' I had but little experience,

I am now fully informed of the ſtate of my fellow-creatures, and with what toil and hazard a longer courſe of years had been attended.

I remember no engagement to the world, but my affection for you; nor has death effaced the tender impreſſion. But what was then a natural ſympathy, is now a rational eſteem. I view with pleaſure your growing virtue, and frequent my native world for your ſake. There was ſomething perfectly engaging in the guiltleſs ſorrow you expreſſed in my ſickneſs; and when my eyes were cloſed in death, you would have watched the breathleſs clay, in hopes to wake me from the fatal ſlumbers again; nor could the gloomy ſolemnity of a room of ſtate deter you from paying your viſits to the ſilent relics. If any thing could have tempted me to wiſh myſelf a mortal again, it would have been the tender tears you ſhed for me. The only intervals of human life I review with pleaſure, are the hours I ſpent with you. This gentle paſſion was the ſtamp of Heaven on my ſoul, the firſt ſoft impreſſion it received; and it gains new energy in theſe happy regions of pure beneficence and love. This gives me a conſtant ſolicitude, while I ſee you on the borders of ſuch a temptation. You are yet perfectly guiltleſs, and have done nothing unbecoming the ſanctity of nature, and the chaſte affection of a ſiſter for a brother. But you are on the very limits of danger; a ſtep further, the leaſt advance, involves you in ſin and deſtruction. I know this diſcovery will give you a ſecret horror, and quench every kindling deſire. The purity of your virtue will ſtart at the inchanting error, that might have led you on to certain perdition: for young as you are, the contagious ſpark is ready to kindle, and the lovely boy appears more alluring. Your mutual converſation, and the early dawning of ſuperior merit in both, endeared you to each other, by ſuch ſentiments as only noble and virtuous minds experience. But as a more late diſcovery might have been fatal to your innocence and peace, I impatiently attended an opportunity and method to make you ſenſible of your danger. I know, tho' I have been dead four years, you ſtill remember me; and I have often heard you name me, and ſeen you with delight gazing on my picture. This made

made me reſolve to appear to you when I ſaw you. The firſt opportunity that pleaſed me, you were ſitting, gazing at your own reflexion; and ſticking flowers in your hair, to adorn it for your young lover. I knew you had read of Fairies, and looked at painted *Cupids* with delight. In ſuch a poetical form I thought you would have heard my ſtory, and been pleaſed with my figure;

While youthful ſplendor lighten'd in my eyes,
Clear as the ſmiling glory of the ſkies;
Sprinkled with radiant gold, a purple hue
My wings diſplay'd, my robe celeſtial blue;
More white than flax my curling treſſes flow'd,
My dimpled cheeks with roſy beauty glow'd.

I could not have believed a form more gay than thoſe that glittered on your fan could have diſcompoſed you; but, to my ſurpriſe, I ſaw you faint away, before I had begun to ſpeak to you. You ſoon recovered from the ſwoon; and returning to the houſe, told a ſtory, which you found no body believed: ſo wiſe is the age in which you live, as not to be impoſed on! You eaſily perſuaded yourſelf it was no more than a dream. However, I durſt attempt your courage no more, but give you this important information this way; which if you ſhould not credit, you are undone. In this admonition your guardian angel joins with

ALEXIS.

LETTER X.

To LEONORA.

YOur ſtory of ſeeing an apparition in the garden, I perceive, has frighted your whole family; and not a mortal durſt venture into the haunted walk, as they call it, after the ſun ſets, but your brother, to whom I have not the leaſt intention to ſhew myſelf. 'Twas only to you, my charming *Leonora*, the viſit was deſigned. I flattered myſelf, your good ſenſe, and uncommon preſence of mind, would have guarded you from thoſe unreaſonable fears.

As

As I expected, the fine evening induced you to take your accuſtomed walk. The ſun was hardly ſet, when you entered a long avenue of trees, that led to a green flowery arch, which looked on a ſylvan palace. Here I ſeated myſelf in a human, and, as I thought, a very agreeable figure and dreſs; and as much as poſſible diſguiſing the ſplendor of immortality, I imitated my mortal form; and ſo placed myſelf, that by ſeeing me at a diſtance, you might come nearer without ſurpriſe, or retire, if your courage failed. As ſoon as you perceived me, you ſtopped, in ſome conſternation; and ſeemed in ſuſpenſe, whether you ſhould go nearer, or make your retreat. I durſt not riſe, nor make the leaſt offer to follow, for fear you ſhould take your flight with too much ſpeed and diſorder; and as you found I was a very civil apparition, and would not intrude on your retirement, you went off with a ſober and decent pace, often looking back to convince yourſelf that what you ſaw was real. As ſoon as you had reached the houſe, I ſhifted my material figure for one more becoming the dignity of the celeſtial condition: and being again inviſible, I heard the fantaſtic relation you gave your brother; who told you, it was all the effect of the ſpleen and obſtinate grief you had indulged ſince my death. You ſtill aſſerted the reality of what you told him; but he believed it no more than if he had heard it from the pulpit.

You might have diſmiſſed every thought of fear. I would not have injured you when I was a mortal, liable to folly and error; much leſs in a ſtate of perfection and happineſs. There is not a ſpark of guilt or malignity left in virtuous minds, when releaſed from their earthly priſon: all is gentle and kind; and their concern for human welfare is infinitely more tender and diſintereſted than before.

The terror with which men fly us, would have ſomething in it incredible, if we did not remember our own original folly and ignorance; but as we do, your ſtrange apprehenſions only divert and entertain us. If you thought juſtly, you would have more reaſon to run full ſpeed from one another, than from us, who have neither permiſſion nor inclination to injure; but are ready to ſcreen you in a thouſand dangers, and to promote your intereſt

intereſt with the moſt generous concern, while you are entirely ignorant of your benefactors. Were human organs more refined, and your perceptions heightened to a greater delicacy, you would ſee a thouſand æthereal forms in the full bloom of immortal beauty and undecaying life; not faſhioned to give you terror, but love and delight.

You ſee, my dear *Leonora*, I would fain cure your prejudices, and reconcile you to the ſociety of ſpirits; that you may ſometimes permit me to warn your unguarded years, when dangers and ſnares attend you.

You know your father left me the guardian of your fortune and beauty; ſo favourable was his opinion of me. This circumſtance made me miſerable, and at once cut off all my future views of happineſs. I had indulged a ſecret paſſion for you, and flattered myſelf you had the ſame for me; but as my birth and fortune were much inferior to your's, I was reſolved rather to die than uſe the advantage that was in my power, or violate the ſacred truſt I had undertaken. By a thouſand little ſoft inadvertencies, you diſcovered your paſſion; but, though ſecure of ſucceſs, I durſt not ſeduce you into a compliance of marriage ſo vaſtly below your high rank and character, nor take the advantage of betraying your thoughtleſs years to an action unbecoming your quality and fortune. My ſoul was unſtained with any deſign that was mean and ſelfiſh; and the entire confidence your father had in my integrity and conduct, fixed my reſolution of acting up to the ſevereſt rules of virtue and truth. But to what diſtreſs was I reduced! I loved you to madneſs, while I never approached you but with a diſſembled indifference. This reſtraint, and the conſtant agitation of my thoughts, diſordered my health; and threw me into a violent fever, which ſoon finiſhed my life. The juſtice and fidelity of my conduct found its immenſe reward; and left me nothing to repent of, but the giving my truſt entirely to your brother's care, whoſe licentious manners will expoſe you to a thouſand dangers. To repair this negligence, I would fain have induced you to a converſation, that might have directed your conduct, and fortified your virtue by my friendly admonition. But ſince your fears put it out of my power

power ever to be viſible to you again, I muſt take this way to convince you how unchangeable my concern for your happineſs is. Oh, let it not be dearer to me than it is to yourſelf!

CLERIMONT.

LETTER XI.

To the ſame.

I Leave your fellow-mortals to congratulate your recovery; but I muſt own it was a diſappointment to me. You were on the confines of immortality. The angels, who are miniſtering ſpirits to the heirs of ſalvation, had prepared their ſong of triumph to receive you; I had wreathed a garland of the faireſt flowers that bloomed in the paradiſe of God, to crown ſuch early and diſtinguiſhed virtue; with impatience I numbered your moments, and expected every one would be your laſt: the ſparkling vivacity of your eyes expired, the roſes on your cheeks vaniſhed into a mortal paleneſs, and the ſprings of life ſeemed juſt ready to ceaſe their motion; when he who governs Nature with a ſupreme command, reſtored you back to health. Your recovery was ſurpriſing even to angels; who, though ignorant of the various limits the Sovereign Diſpoſer has ſet to human life, yet often make exact conjectures of the courſe of ſecond cauſes, and the period of mortal lives. You are certainly given back as a bleſſing to the world: your example may yet make a thouſand proſelytes to virtue. But for my part, nothing but the will of Heaven could reconcile me to this diſpenſation; when you was juſt in the harbour, to be toſſed back again on the tempeſtuous ocean; when you had welcomed Death, as your kind deliverer, ready to free you from *Caſſander*'s importunity, and your brother's tyranny, who will do his utmoſt to compel you to this deteſtable marriage. But your conſtancy to refuſe it is of the higheſt importance to your preſent and future happineſs. He is already married, under a borrowed name, to a young and beautiful *Italian*, whom he ſtole from her parents; and after he had lived two months concealed with her, the perjured man left and abandoned

ed her to miſery. In the height of her anguiſh, ſhe put herſelf into a nunnery, where ſhe waſtes her days in a reluctant and unprofitable devotion: for true religion cannot exiſt but by our choice; neceſſity can give nothing but the appearance of it.

This is a ſecret, of which you would never have been informed by any human means. If you diſcover it to your brother, it will deliver you from the violence which he is determined to uſe, to force you to wed *Caſſander*, another name for *miſery*.

It is a diſintereſted concern for you, that makes me give you this advice. There is no jealouſy in heavenly minds. They know their pre-eminence; and ſhould they appear in their celeſtial ſplendor, the moſt perfect beauty of the children of men would wither in their preſence. But vanity and emulation are no more, and all ſelfiſh deſigns are unknown in theſe happy continents.

You may, by making a proper uſe of this notice, provide for your own happineſs; but, bleſſed be the great Author of all good! you cannot add to mine.

CLERIMONT.

LETTER XII.

To my dear brother.

YOur friend, the unhappy *Carlos*, died this night at *Naples*. I was willing to ſurpriſe you with this intelligence, in a way which no human ſpeed can reach.

I wiſh my endeavours for your reformation may have more ſucceſs now, than they had when I was in a ſtate of mortality. I am perſuaded, if you had ſeen the exit of the wretched youth, who had been the companion of your riots, it would have convinced you of the falſehood of his principles; and how little ſupport the thoughts of falling back into his original nothing gave him, when the gloomy hour approached, in which he was to loſe the ſight of the ſun and ſtars, with all the viſible beauties of nature, for ever.

To be inſenſible! to be no more! to find his eyes cloſing in an eternal ſleep! gave him inexpreſſible horrors. But if this was the worſt that he apprehended,

never did mortal give up his life in a manner more cowardly and inconſiſtent. He durſt not bear darkneſs or ſolitude one moment: he ſtarted at a ſhadow, and ſhewed a more than childiſh fear and weakneſs in his actions: he even begged his phyſicians to flatter him with the hopes of life, and not let him know if they thought his caſe deſperate: he charged his attendant not to mention death or the grave, nor to ſpeak a ſerious word in his hearing. Though his affairs were in the utmoſt diſorder, no perſon durſt venture to adviſe him to ſettle them by a will. But all theſe cautions gave him no relief; the anguiſh, the guilt, the confuſion of his mind, was viſible in his looks. The abandoned *Amoret*, who had followed him in the diſguiſe of a page, was ſeldom permitted to ſee him; and whenever ſhe approached him, he trembled, and fell into the greateſt agonies, cloſed his eyes, or turned them from her: but ſpoke nothing to ſupport her in the diſtreſs he had brought on her; nor expreſſed the leaſt remorſe for having ſeduced her to leave the noble *Sebaſtian*, to whom ſhe was engaged by marriage-vows, and a thouſand tender obligations. His peeviſhneſs and impatience were inſufferable, and even deſpicable to his own ſervants. When the medicines he took had not their expected ſucceſs, he reproached his phyſicians with negligence, or want of ſkill; and yet by intervals implored their aſſiſtance, as if his being itſelf depended on their art. His ſenſes were perfect to the laſt gaſp. With amazement he ſaw the univerſal terror make its ſlow and dreadful approaches; and, after a tedious and painful ſtruggle, yielded to the gloomy conqueror, and with a deep groan gave up his breath, and went to make the great experiment.

I hope this account of your friend's death will have the happy effect I deſigned it, and make you recollect the counſel I gave you with my dying breath; —— the beſt legacy I could bequeath, if I had had empires to diſpoſe of.

My dear brother, I can have no ſelfiſh motives now, in endeavouring to reclaim your extravagancies. In this ſuperior ſtate, my concern for your happineſs muſt be all abſtract and generous. The acknowledgments of indigent miſerable mortals, ſignify nothing to ſpirits exalted

to

to celeſtial dignities, in the full enjoyment of immortal pleaſures: but this gives them the moſt kind and beneficent diſpoſitions to erring men, whom they would fain allure into the paths that lead to happineſs. Thoſe glimmering ſparks of goodneſs and amity, which in your cold regions are but juſt dawning in virtuous minds, in theſe warmer climates acquire new ardor, and burn with eternal ſplendor.

I have more zeal than ever for your intereſt; and let me recal, but not reproach you with the obligations you have to pay ſome regard to my advice. You know, when we loſt the beſt of parents, that he left his whole eſtate to my diſpoſal, with ſuch a moderate fortune to your ſhare, as muſt have reſtrained your wild expences: but when I found you had ſome ſenſe of your folly, in hopes to reform you by generous treatment, I immediately ſettled on you half the vaſt fortune that was in my power. I will not urge my venturing my life in your defence, when aſſaulted in our travels: for this was but an action of humanity, which every brave man owes to a perfect ſtranger. But I muſt inſiſt on the merit of reſigning my pretenſions to the lovely *Bellamira* for you. She was all the joy, the hope, I had on earth; I loved her as I loved virtue and happineſs: and yet, when you diſcovered to me the anguiſh and diſorder of your mind, and your violent paſſion for her, I made a retreat, and left the weeping beauty to reproach me with a levity and indifference to which my heart was a ſtranger; diſguiſed my tender inclination, and pleaded your's with ſuch ſucceſs, that ſhe yielded to your requeſt, and gave her matchleſs charms and immenſe fortune to your poſſeſſion.

But this advantageous match had not the effect I hoped, nor was the leaſt reſtraint to your licentious manner of life. You acted a ſhameful part in aſſiſting *Carlos* in his affair with *Amoret*; and a more ſhameful one in promiſing to protect and ſupport her, if he abandoned her, when you knew what repeated favours you had received from the injured and generous *Sebaſtian*. Your treacherous and ungrateful treatment of a man of his exalted merit fills me with the greateſt remorſe and confuſion. A thouſand and a thouſand times have I re-

proached myſelf for having been the unhappy inſtrument of *Bellamira*'s ruin; who pined beneath her grief like a fair flower blaſted in its prime. I never met her eyes, but ſhe might have ſeen the remorſe and confuſion of my ſoul. The negligence and contempt with which you treated the beſt of women, ſunk my youthful ſpirits, damped my nobleſt deſigns, and clouded the gayeſt ſeaſon of my life. While death made its ſlow and ſilent approaches, the laſt favour I begged of you was, to be juſt to your unhappy wife, in breaking all engagements with the lewd and infamous *Amoret*. This you promiſed me with a religious ſolemnity. But I know, her preſent diſtreſs (though the juſt effect and reward of her crimes) will be your ſnare. She is all inchantment, and will, I fear, be your ruin. But if you reject my advice, take this caution from the Royal penitent, *Her houſe is the way to death, and her gates lead down to hell.* And I deſire you to conſider ſeriouſly, that this admonition muſt *reſcue* you from, or *double* your guilt.

CLEANDER.

LETTER XIII.

To ———

HOwever different my preſent manner of exiſtence is from my former ſtate, my affection to the fair *Climene* is unchanged. As I live and act in a way inexpreſſibly ſuperior to mortal life, ſo the beneficent diſpoſitions of my nature riſe to a more noble and generous height. My concern for your happineſs is more tender and diſintereſted than ever. I have guarded your nightly ſlumbers, waited on your ſolitary walks, and followed you like your attendant angel; who, pleaſed with my officious care, has often left you to my charge. Your preſent danger gives me as much anxiety as conſiſts with a ſtate of happineſs. I could not refrain from giving you this warning; which, to your ſurpriſe, you'll find on your toilet, among trifles the moſt its reverſe.

You are, O too credulous fair! on the very brink of ruin. Treachery and deluſion are in *Alcander*'s eyes and tongue; and if you keep this night's appointment with him,

him, you are undone. Infamy and perdition are before you. The evil *genii* that envy the happineſs of the human race, already inſult my pious care; and your celeſtial guardian ſeems half reſolved to quit his truſt. The tender grief hangs on his beautiful face, like a cloud on the roſy morning; and in the deepeſt ſilence of the night, when the creation ſeemed lulled in an univerſal ſlumber, in the gloom of a neighbouring grove that you often frequent, I heard him tune his ſilver lute, to ſtrains ſoft and languiſhing, as thoſe in which the heavenly miniſters mourned the loſs of paradiſe, and the bold tranſgreſſion of the firſt woman that fell. And your's, unhappy maid! will be a fall from the heights of honour, from the very triumph of virtue. What can man believe! what can the ſex boaſt, when ſuch innocence, ſuch truth, ſuch modeſty as your's, are perverted? Vice will inſult, to find *Climene* among her votaries, and hardly believe her own conqueſt; ſurpriſed like the barbarous *Gauls* in the *Roman* ſenate, who thought it an aſſembly of gods, till they ſaw them bleed.

With what a profligate air, with what inſolent vanity, did your young ſeducer leave you laſt night! how proud of his unexpected ſucceſs, when he had gained your conſent to the guilty aſſignation! I ſtaid with you an unſeen witneſs of the remorſe and confuſion in which he left you. How diſordered! how uneaſy! how unlike yourſelf, did you appear! It was your uſual hour of devotion. A Bible lay near, which you took in your hand, but durſt not open, for fear the ſanctity of its rules ſhould reproach you. The diſtraction of your thoughts gave me hopes, that you would recover yourſelf, and break the guilty engagement you had made. To confirm your doubtful virtue, I was on the point of making myſelf viſible; but the unaccountable fear that mortals have of the inhabitants of the immaterial worlds reſtrained me, leſt the effect ſhould have been fatal to your timorous temper, however gentle and propitious my appearance and addreſs had been. And I thought this letter might leſs ſurpriſe, and more calmly perſuade you.

You have yet a few hours to recollect yourſelf. And ſure you will not give up an unblemiſhed reputation, with all the peace and innocence of your mind, to this

blind extravagant paſſion! Beſides the injuſtice to the unhappy *Sylvia*, to whom *Alcander* is engaged by a thouſand vows, and who now pines away in obſcurity, a victim to his falſehood and perjury. Be virtuous and compaſſionate; be kind to her, and juſt to yourſelf.

After this warning, even from the dead, your crime will be aggravated. You muſt deliberately venture on perdition, and damn yourſelf with deſign, and ſober reflexion. You muſt deſperately give up your title to celeſtial happineſs; to the worlds of life and pleaſure, of immortal beauty and youth. Oh, how ſuperior to that with which you are at this inſtant ſo fatally enamoured below!

LETTER XIV.

To ———

MY dear ſiſter, I have often, ſince I left the world, had the privilege to ſupply the place of your guardian angel. I have been an inviſible witneſs of your tears for my death; and to allay the exceſs of your grief for me, I have been at laſt permitted to let you know that I am happy.

I can give you no account how my ſoul was releaſed. I fell aſleep in perfect health, with an unuſual ſerenity of mind; and, from the gentleſt ſlumbers of innocence and peace, awaked in immortal bliſs. (How common is ſudden death!) I found myſelf in a moment got above the ſtars, and outſhining the ſun in its meridian ſplendor. Corruption had put on incorruption, and mortality was ſwallowed up of life and immortality. O Death! I cried in the exaltation of my thoughts, O Death! where is thy conqueſt? O King of Terrors! where is thy boaſted victory? Where is thy ſceptre and imperial horrors, thy gloomy ſtate, and dreadful attendants? Where are thy vaſt dominions, the chearleſs and formleſs darkneſs, the ſhade and the emptineſs, the ſeats of corruption and decay? The ſpell is broken! the inchantment is diſſolved! the ſhadows, the phantoms, the viſionary terrors fly! the celeſtial morning dawns, and charming

charming ſcenes ariſe. But, oh! how boundleſs, how various, how tranſporting the proſpect!

Still loſt in joy and wonder, Tell me, ſaid I, ye angels, ye ſmiling forms that ſurround me, what eaſy paſſage has my ſpirit found from its mortal priſon? What gentle hand has unlocked my earthly fetters, and brought me out of darkneſs and confinement into immenſe light and liberty? Who was the kind meſſenger that conveyed the welcome invitation to my ear? What melodious voice called me away from yonder cold tempeſtuous regions, to theſe ſoft and peaceful habitations? How have I found my paſſage through the trackleſs æther, and gained the ſummit of the everlaſting hills? Am I awake? Do I dream? Is this a gay, a flattering viſion? Oh, no! 'Tis all bleſsful and tranſporting certainty! I ſee, I hear things unutterable, ſuch as never entered into the heart of mortal man to conceive.——Read, and believe; believe, and be happy.

You ſee, my dear ſiſter, how blindly you repine at the decrees of Heaven, and how unreaſonably you lament what you call my early and untimely fate. Could I be happy too ſoon? I left the world indeed, in the full pride of my youthful years, in the height of greatneſs and reputation, ſurrounded with the blandiſhments and flatteries of pleaſure. But theſe advantages might have been fatal ſnares to my virtue in a longer trial. It was indulgent in Heaven, after a ſhort probation, to crown me with the rewards of victory. 'Tis paſt the toil, the danger; and all to come is endleſs peace and triumph.

If you could ſee as far into futurity now, and think as juſtly of it as you will certainly do on your deathbed, this letter from me had been ſuperfluous. I only can *deſign* it beneficial; you may *make* it ſo.

LETTER XV.

To ——————

'TIS paſt! The voyage of life is finiſhed! Inſtead of informing you, that I am arrived at the *Indian* coaſts, this is to let you know, that I am ſafely landed

on

on the celeſtial ſhores. The veſſel in which I was imbarked, by a tempeſt ſunk to the bottom of the ocean; and the angel of the waters received my newly unembodied ſoul.

I was ſurpriſed at the different manner of my exiſtence. I breathed indeed no longer; but I lived, I heard, I ſaw, with a more exquiſite ſenſe than before. But a few moments were paſt ſince the raging billows carried deſtruction in their appearance; and now I moved unterrified through the deeps, and ſurveyed the foundation of the ancient hills. The regent of the waters, pleaſed with my curioſity, led me through his cryſtal palaces and coral groves; ſhewed me the pearly grottoes and alcoves of amber, with a thouſand wonders, kept ſecret from the race of men ſince the baſes of the mountains were laid.

As ſoon as I had gone the round of the liquid regions, an æthereal meſſenger took me under his conduct. I followed my gentle guide through the airy ſpaces; and here all was novelty and ſurpriſe. I made the tour of the univerſe, and explored the limits of the creation, with unſpeakable agility. I moved from ſtar to ſtar, and met ten thouſand ſuns blazing in full glory, without fear or conſternation. I followed the track of prodigious comets, that drew their flaming tails over half the ſky. From the planetary regions I aſcended, with the eaſe and ſwiftneſs of a thought, to the ſuperior heaven, the imperial palace of the Moſt High. But here deſcription fails, and all beyond is unutterable.

This is the only account you can poſſibly receive of my death, which your own fears had ſo truly preſaged at our parting. And this, my much-loved *Henrietta*, I hope, will put an end to all your anxiety; for ſince the change has proved ſo happy for me, you are too much my friend to be concerned thereat.

PHILANDER.

LETTER XVI.

To my Lord ———

My dear brother,

AS immaterial beings mingle unſeen in what ſociety they pleaſe, I had the curioſity laſt night to know your thoughts of what had happened to you the night before; and I heard you make a very gay declamation to ſome of your free companions, on the power of fancy, and the ſtrength of your own imagination. But really, my Lord, you are not ſo viſionary and extravagant as you repreſented yourſelf. There is nothing more certain than what you ſaw and heard; and you might have credited your ſenſes without ſo much diffidence and modeſty, which you turn into a vice.

You have but a few weeks, my dear brother, to live: your ſands are numbered, and your laſt hour is determined. I obtained a permiſſion, ſeldom allowed, to give you ſome warning of your approaching fate. I choſe the opportunity, when I found you, in a clear moonlight night, ſitting in a penſive poſture, by the ſide of a fountain in your garden. To gain credit to my meſſage, I ſtood before you, in the ſplendor of a heavenly form, and the bloom of immortal beauty; but ſo reſembling my former ſelf, that, in your ſurpriſe, you called me ſiſter, and ſtepped forward to embrace me. I durſt not profane myſelf by a mortal touch; but, deluding your arms, placed myſelf before you on the oppoſite ſide of the canal. I ſtood ſilent ſome time, that you might be recollected; and then ſetting a golden lute, which I had in my hand, to one of the melodious ſtrains which angels ſing to expiring ſaints, when they would ſoften the agonies of death, and make its terrors ſmile; in thoſe languiſhing and melting notes I gave you an invitation to the ſtarry manſions, believing this would have a much better effect than any thing terrible, to one of your undaunted temper. I delivered my meſſage, and in an inſtant diſappeared.

I have repeated theſe circumſtances to you, as a proof that all was real, and neither a dream, nor a waking *reverie*,

verie, as you have perſuaded yourſelf. But ſince no mortal knows this but yourſelf, and you concealed the greateſt part of this relation from your gay friends, when you was ſo eloquent on the wonders of imagination; I hope this will find its wiſhed ſucceſs, and put you on the moſt exact preparation to meet with a Chriſtian fortitude the greateſt terror that mortal man can encounter. Though your life has been unſtained with any baſe or unjuſt action, there are ſome levities in your converſation that require your ſpeedy penitence and reformation; or ſeeming *trifles* will enlarge themſelves into the greateſt *errors*.

It is a ſerious thing, my Lord, to die. You thought ſo, when with the moſt tender concern you ſaw me ſhivering and pale, anxious and fearful, on the very borders of death, doubtful to enter, and terrified at the darkneſs that hung on the gloomy valley; when even the follies of my childhood, which was hardly paſt, and the ſlighteſt errors of my youth, ſat heavy on my ſoul. And, oh! how unwillingly did my ſoul quit its agreeable manſion! how many ſoft engagements made me fond of life! The charming youth to whom I was contracted by my parents, detained me with his tears. Had angels beckoned me to the ſkies, that melting language would have tempted me back.

You little think, my dear brother, what regularity of the paſſions, what ſanctity of manners, are neceſſary to take off the horrors of death, and make that gloomy monarch wear a ſmiling aſpect.

Take this friendly admonition, and be for ever happy. Then will that relation which is now between us, ſtill ſubſiſt; and I ſhall be, in joys inxpreſſible, your ſiſter to all eternity.

SERENA.

LETTER XVII.

To PHILOCLES, *from* IBRAHIM, *a* Turkiſh *Baſſa*.

IT was you, my dear *Philocles*, that Heaven made the inſtrument of my converſion to Chriſtianity. But while I was in a ſtate of mortality, it was impoſſible for me

me to know the greatneſs of my obligations to you, and to what height of felicity your friendly inſtructions directed me. How low, how diſproportioned were my expectations, to the grandeur of my preſent happineſs! How ſuperior is it, even to thoſe noble ideas your deſcription gave me of celeſtial joys! As you converted me to, let me eſtabliſh you in the only true religion.

What reaſon have I to bleſs the moment that began our acquaintance, and the event that placed your character to my view in ſuch an agreeable light! There was indeed ſomething in your whole conduct ſo artleſs, ſo ſincere, ſo conformable to the ſtricteſt rules of truth and juſtice, that I at once quitted my prejudices to the faith you avowed. The Chriſtian (which is not always the caſe) recommended Chriſtianity.

The negotiations I had with you when you were Conſul for the ſtates of *Holland* at *Smyrna*, gave me numerous inſtances of your honeſt and generous diſpoſition. But nothing ſurpriſed me more, than ſeeing you venture your life in a dreadful ſtorm, to ſave a *Portugueſe*, your mortal enemy, whoſe veſſel was juſt overſet, and himſelf ready to ſink amidſt the threatening waves, which he, till then, imagined leſs his foe than yourſelf. I was witneſs to the god-like action; and immediately concluded, that there muſt be ſomething divine in a religion, that could raiſe human nature to ſuch an height of beneficence. It was all reſiſtleſs conviction; my ſoul confeſſed its force, while I conſidered with what a becoming modeſty you received the acknowledgments of your adverſary, as calmly as for ſome trifling favour you would have accepted the thanks of your ſincereſt friend. You ſeemed conſcious of having done nothing extraordinary; nothing but what was ſuitable to the conſtant diſpoſition of your mind, if Heaven had favoured you with more frequent occaſions of performing ſuch heroic actions. You have a ſenſe to make what is heroic, *common*.

It was a charity truly divine, that made you hazard your life, and expoſe it to the worſt of torments, to reſcue me from error. I was more inquiſitive than the laws of the *Alcoran* allowed; which induced me to ſeek ſo many opportunities of converſing with you. Without

out the leaſt caution, or regard to your own ſafety, you left yourſelf to the mercy of an infidel, ſatisfied my ſcruples, and importuned me to quit the *Mahometan* faith. Your conduct was all demonſtration; and convinced me, that nothing but heavenly truth could inſpire you with ſuch fortitude, and kindle in your ſoul a charity ſo perfectly diſintereſted. I was ſoon vanquiſhed, and became a joyful proſelyte to the Chriſtian principles; nor found the leaſt regret in leaving my native ſoil, to follow you to the *Hague*, where I might openly profeſs the faith I had embraced, and be in the right with impunity!

It was not long before a fever ſeized me. When I found the ſymptoms mortal, I ſent for you to eaſe my burthened ſoul of the only care that oppreſſed it; but before you came, my ſpeech was loſt. However, the diſcovery was of ſuch importance, that it ſtill engages my concern; nor is there any perſon whoſe fidelity I can depend on like your's.

I purchaſed a beautiful *Grecian* ſlave, the firſt and only object of my love. Though ſhe was in my power, I only attempted, by gentle methods, to gain her affections; but in vain. Her Chriſtian belief ſtill ſet the view of future rewards and puniſhments before her, and checked her ſofteſt inclinations. To conquer her virtue, I was induced to pervert her to the doctrines of the *Alcoran*. As abſurdly as I reaſoned, ſhe was ſoon convinced, that her ſoul was as periſhing as her body; and that there was no proſpect of immortality for any of her ſex; that preſent joys were all ſhe could expect; and, in loſing youth and love, ſhe loſt the higheſt end of her creation. Too ſoon the fair apoſtate believed my deteſted doctrines, and took the poiſon from my tongue; renounced the great Meſſiah, and embraced the idle dreams of an impoſtor; gave up her claim to immortality, and yielded herſelf to my licentious wiſhes. Thus free from the reſtraints of religion, the fair libertine grew diſſolute and profane beyond the limits of her ſex. Her ſportive wit and boundleſs vanity now ridiculed all that ſhe once thought ſacred. There was ſomething ſo wild, ſo unnatural in her impiety, that I half repented my ſucceſs; but never was truly ſenſible of the injury I had done her, till I was convinced of the truth of Chriſtianity. It is

this

this unſpeakable damage that I hope you will find ſome method to repair. It will not be impoſſible, by ſome of your friends, to find acceſs to her. She is now at my brother's diſpoſal. Her ranſom will be eaſy, and a charity worthy your character. Your *charity* will redeem her perſon, your *example* her mind, from a more deplorable ſlavery.

IBRAHIM.

LETTER XVIII.

To a ſon, from his deceaſed father.

IF there is the leaſt ſpark of filial gratitude in your breaſt; if there is any deference due to the memory of a once indulgent father, I charge you to recal the challenge you have ſent——What ſhall I ſay?——not to your adverſary, but to your generous, your well-meaning friend. His admonitions were juſt; and the relation he gave you, undoubted fact. You know in your conſcience, the woman you vindicate has neither virtue nor reputation to defend; while you are daring death, and all the horrors that enſue, to juſtify a known falſehood, and purchaſe *ſhame* with *heaven*.

If you are killed in this mad duel, the moment you breathe your laſt, you will mingle with a ſociety that make very different judgments of things, from what paſs for maxims of honour among mortals. You will appear with a very ill grace, and on a moſt impertinent occaſion, among the ſpirits of darkneſs, to whom you will be an eternal object of deriſion. The boaſted beauty and charms of your miſtreſs, will be but a poor excuſe for your gallantry, though you ſhould tell them in heroics, how *the world has been loſt for a woman*.

Theſe extravagancies will vaniſh with mortality: Death will draw the veil, and place more ſerious ſcenes in view. You will find how cheaply you have ſold immortal glory; and curſe the fond inchantment that led you on to deſtruction; deteſting that moſt, the love of which is now your inducement to ruin.

But aſk yourſelf, What is the virtue of this fine Lady, in defence of whom you are going with ſuch bravery to

die? What is this honour you are giving up your life, and all your hopes of ſalvation, to maintain? This guiltleſs lovely woman is only perjured to her marriage-vows: this angel, this divine creature, does but deceive, does but expoſe to infamy, the beſt of huſbands; ſhe does but return his unequalled tenderneſs and conſtant affection to her, with artful fondneſs, and diſſembled complaiſance. She is but inſenſible to the merit of a man who is his country's ornament and pride; a perſon of the moſt graceful appearance, by nature formed to pleaſe the niceſt of the fair ſex; liberal and magnificent, obliging and ſincere above all diſguiſe; and who, from his own conſcious honour, entirely confides in this artful woman, whom he raiſed from diſtreſs and obſcurity. Charmed with her beauty, and diſſembled affection for him, he has indulged all her wild ambition, gratified her boundleſs vanity, and ſet no more limits to her expences, than you now to your folly.

This is the unhappy man you would expoſe to the jeſt of every ſenſeleſs rake, by a public quarrel for the reputation of his wife. What *enmity* could be ſo cruel as this *defence!*

And this is the dear innocent charmer, whoſe virtue you would juſtify, even by damning yourſelf, and murdering the generous *Lindamor*, your beſt, your experienced friend, whoſe ſincerity has been his only crime. Be not ſo ſhamefully valiant. With what confuſion muſt you draw your ſword on a man, to whom you have ſuch a ſeries of obligations? How often has he ſupplied the neceſſities to which your extravagant gaming has reduced you, and diſcharged your debts of honour, as you call them? And what was his offence now, but ſetting the character of an infamous woman in its true light, with a kind intention to reclaim you from your dotage?

What a fatal influence has this diſſolute paſſion had on your mind! How proſligate your manners! how unlike to the firſt part of your life, when a noble inclination governed your ſoul, and the lovely *Erminia* was all your joy! Oh! may her youthful charms recover you, and animate your mind to glorious actions! Your King, your country, the Proteſtant cauſe, the rights and liberties of human nature, now require your courage, and find

find better employment for your ſword than to aſſaſſinate your friends. If you are truly brave, have the *courage* to ſubmit; the only way to conquer him.

EUSEBIUS.

LETTER XIX.

To my Lord ——, from his deceaſed wife.

YOur preſent confinement by a ſlow recovery from a dangerous ſickneſs, makes me hope this may prove a time to prevail with you to pity the injured *Sylviana*, and be juſt to your obligations to her.

You once loved me, my Lord; and, while I lived, the guiltleſs paſſion had an effect on your whole conduct. But your grief for me gave a very extravagant turn to your mind; and, inſtead of leading you to a ſuperior, a reaſonable happineſs, you have abandoned yourſelf to the heights of ſenſuality. You have purſued pleaſure in every tempting diſguiſe, refined on vice, and turned it into a ſcience; and are too truly learned in it. Your ſtately rooms have ſounded with nightly revels, and looſe inchanting ſongs; your groves and fragrant gardens have been devoted to luxury, and infamous delights; the ſhades and fountains have been witneſs to ſcenes unbecoming their chaſte retreats; you have found out new ways to perdition, and ſet no limits to you diſſolute inclinations, which ſurvive *ſatiety* itſelf.

But, under this gay diſguiſe, this triumph of vanity and madneſs, you have not known an interval of happineſs that has been ſincere. You could not conquer your own good ſenſe, nor wholly forget the reſtraints of a noble education. I have been witneſs to your ſecret remorſe, your penitent ſoliloquies: I have ſeen you recollect yourſelf, aſſume your native greatneſs; heard you, with the moſt moving eloquence, lament your folly, and aſſent to all the rules of temperance and virtue; aſſent to, and violate the ſame hour.

You have relapſed to your uſual extravagance, till this dangerous ſickneſs ſet the terrors of death in your view. It was then you confeſſed your injuſtice to the charming *Sylviana*. It hung on your ſoul, and appeared with a

thouſand aggravations. Nor will you ever know peace till you have confirmed your vows, and the abſolute obligations you are under to marry her. Obligations to be happy, methinks, ſhould be eaſily complied with.

How happy was the lovely maid in her humble circumſtances! how bleſſed in her ſpotleſs innocence! till chance (in your rural excurſions) led you in a luckleſs hour to the verdant ſhade, where you found her retired to ſcreen herſelf from the mid-day ſun, unmoleſted with the cares of love or ambition.

The natural elegance, the modeſty, and eaſineſs of her behaviour, fired your thoughts; and partly by violence, and partly with the moſt ſolemn vows of marriage, you ruined her.

But what unaffected ſorrow, what remorſe that fatal moment coſt her, you have often witneſſed. With what graceful pride has ſhe ſince refuſed the leaſt favour, and been inflexible to your ſofteſt perſuaſions, on any terms, but the marriage you promiſed her? How moving have her tears been! how juſt her complaints! what a pomp of virtue, what a conſcious greatneſs has appeared in her aſpect, when, by your artful addreſſes, you have again endeavoured to ſeduce her! Nor preſents, nor equipage, nor the moſt profuſe ſettlement you have offered her, has tempted her to act in any character, but what Virtue might own, in the view of heaven and the world. Her very crime with you ſhould have the force of virtue in it.

Your quality, my Lord, does not abſolve you from the divine laws, nor give a ſanction to perjury; but rather inforces the obligations of equity and truth. In real merit, the fair *Sylviana* is not your inferior; but, if ſhe were, Heaven does not diſpenſe with the rules of juſtice on the account of airy titles, and imaginary diſtinctions of birth. The higheſt ſatisfaction that you can make, may perhaps never give her that tranquillity ſhe enjoyed in her firſt humble circumſtances. Could you reſtore her loſt innocence, ſhe would be more bleſſed in that, than in all the grandeur to which you can raiſe her. You may alleviate her misfortune; you cannot make full amends.

Nor

Nor can the loſs of a tender parent be repaired. With a modeſt ingenuity the injured nymph confeſſed her crime to her pious mother; who was ſo oppreſſed with the thought of ſuch an infamy, that in a few weeks ſhe expired, and left her beauteous daughter to weep out her ſolitary hours. Her diſtreſs demands your compaſſion; and, by an act of juſtice to her, you will ſecure your future peace and happineſs, and ſhew your gratitude to

MARIANA.

LETTER XX.

To VARRIUS.

YOU have ſoon forgot my dying admonitions, and the promiſe you made me to quit the guilty amour you are ſtill purſuing. Can you, with deliberation, with reflexion, proceed in a deſign which muſt, if you ſucceed, plunge the beautiful *Cleora* in guilt and infamy, whom you love? What could hatred do more?

But with what horror ought you to reflect on the injury you are doing to the generous *Alphonſus*, your benefactor! Is there nothing engaging in thoſe titles? or rather, are they not words of the moſt ſacred importance? Make it not the future intereſt of mankind to be your foes.

A man of your pretended honour could not bear the reproach of a lye; and yet you are acting a lye; practiſing the vileſt treachery, and expoſing a perſon of merit to ridicule. This, however unjuſt, muſt be the conſequence of your ſucceſs; while he, ſecure in his own worth and integrity, continues to careſs the wretch that injures him. How can you ſupport the ſtings of his kindneſs to you?

To this injured, this generous man, you owe the height of your fortune. It was his intereſt alone that brought you into public truſt and reputation. To requite him, you are violating all the laws of humanity, bringing infamy on his family, and ſecretly endeavouring to rival him in the affections of his charming wife, the object of all his virtuous joys; of which; from whom

could he more properly exact the protection, than from you?

Can you unmoved recal the diſtreſs into which a crime of this nature plunged my heedleſs youth? what remorſe, what confuſion, a moment's madneſs coſt me? You was the only confident to whom I diſcovered the ſecret wound it gave my bleeding ſoul.

But how fatal was that one ſally of an extravagant paſſion to all my future repoſe! Deſpair and horror filled my breaſt, when I conſidered the injury I had done was beyond reparation. Retirement was no more my ſanctuary from the noiſy croud; the image of my crime purſued me with inexpreſſible terrors; the innocent diverſions of life were taſteleſs; muſic and wit had loſt their charms; the propoſals of pleaſure were like jeſts to dying men, like recreations to the damned. Whatever decency appeared in my public behaviour, you were witneſs to the private intervals of my grief, and gave ſome relief to my anguiſh, by hearing my complaints with an obliging attention. But Nature, after all its efforts, ſunk; the pride of my youth yielded to the gloomy diſtemper. Yet the ſincerity of my repentance found acceptance: and, as my laſt hour approached, ſome propitious ſpirit breathed peace and divine conſolation to my ſoul, and in theſe gentle whiſpers reproved my infidelity.

Why ſhould preſumptuous man, with feeble doubt,
And impotence of thought, mark out the bounds
Of clemency divine?——What tongue ſhall dare
Pronounce with impious vanity theſe words?
" Thus far, nor farther, thy exulting waves,
" O thou abyſs of ſacred Love! ſhall roll:
" Here thy triumphant billows ſhall retire,
" Nor paſs the bounds of human diffidence."

But however ſerene the laſt ſcene of my life was, I would not, for all the joys the lower creation could give, endure the diſtraction and remorſe that one error coſt me. Are you ſoftened at the complaints of my miſery? be terrified at the approaches of your own.

Thus warned, I hope you will retire. A thouſand accidents have hitherto prevented your guilt, and croſſed the

the madneſs of your love. Some pauſe of reaſon, ſome effort of virtue, may at laſt recover you from the paths of ruin. Comply with reaſon and virtue, with honour and friendſhip, with your own happineſs and that of others, with the intereſt of the *living* and the deſires of the *dead*.

THEODOSIUS.

THOUGHTS

THOUGHTS ON DEATH.

Tranſlated from the MORAL ESSAYS of Meſſ. *de Port-Royal.*

BEYOND the addreſs which men have, never to think of death but as at a very great diſtance, nor to view it but in ſome other perſon, without putting themſelves one moment in the place of the *dying*; they have yet a farther art to delude themſelves, by forming ſuch a general and confuſed idea, as conceals from them all that is moſt terrible in death. They conceive little elſe of this ſtate, but as a privation of ſenſe, and a ſeparation from the commerce of life; ſo that when they ſay a man is dead, they only mean, that they ſee him no more, and that he ſhares no longer in the affairs of the world. In a word, their idea of death is only formed on what men ceaſe to do in dying, and not on what they begin to do and feel, though it be that which conſtitutes its moſt dreadful circumſtance.

Death is indeed a privation of life and human action; but it is a privation which is felt, and produces ſurpriſing effects in the ſoul. In order to comprehend theſe effects, it is neceſſary to conſider, that while the ſoul is united to the body, its attention is divided by divers kinds of ſenſations, imaginations, and paſſions. It feels the objects which act on the body, according to their different manner of influence; and theſe different ways of perceiving are called *ſenſations*. On theſe the ſoul forms

forms its ideas of all things to which it is united by its paſſions, and is always employed about theſe objects; and not only employed, but leans and repoſes on them, when it is not entirely united to God. For, not being made with a capacity to ſuſtain itſelf, the ſoul neceſſarily ſeeks ſome foreign ſupport. It was formed to know and love; but, finding nothing within ſufficient to ſatisfy theſe inclinations, it is forced with ſome other objects to fill the void it finds in itſelf. Some of theſe objects make agreeable impreſſions on the ſenſe; others content our curioſity and vanity; others relieve the mind, by turning it from things which appear diſguſting; ſome nouriſh its hopes, while others fortify it againſt its fears. The ſoul inclines to all the objects of ſenſe, and is engaged and ſupported by them, in ſuch a manner, that it cannot prove a ſeparation without pain and emotion.

We are not always ſenſible of theſe ties; but the ſoul begins to feel them, when it comes to be ſeparated from what it loves. It has then a ſenſe of the privation, proportionable to its union with them. So true is that maxim of St *Auguſtine*, "It is impoſſible to loſe any "thing without ſorrow, but what we poſſeſs without "paſſion."

There are few perſons free from an infinite number of theſe engagements; and though we are ignorant of them, till an actual ſeparation diſcovers what they are, we may nevertheleſs conceive ſomething, by ſeparating ourſelves from them in our thoughts, and imagining we are deprived of them by ſome accident.

For inſtance, take a perſon who does not ſeem to place his happineſs in the objects of ſight, and fancies they contribute nothing to the tranquillity of his mind; and ſuppoſe him ſuddenly deprived of his ſight; though in all other circumſtances happy, we ſhould find him affected with the loſs, as the greateſt misfortune. The ſight of mankind gives us ſome conſolation, becauſe we always diſcover in them a certain appearance of compaſſion, capable to give us ſuccour in our neceſſities; which at leaſt indulges our hopes, and thoſe hopes excite a kind of ſecret joy.

The objects which in ſome reſpects are diſguſting to the ſoul, and raiſe its fears and averſion, yet in other views

views fail not to ſuſtain it. For though theſe uneaſy paſſions cannot be altogether appeaſed, yet the imagination always furniſhes them with means or hopes that quiet them; while the purſuit of thoſe means, or the hopes of arriving at the end of their deſires, employ and divert the mind.

All the objects to which the ſoul is joined, by the ſenſes, imagination, reaſon, or paſſions, are its goods and riches; and even thoſe we call poor, abound in theſe ſort of goods. If they want palaces, or even a cottage, they have the ſky, the ſun, and ſtars; of which the proſpect is ſo magnificent, that St *Auguſtine* ſays, "It is a "greater bleſſing for the poor to behold the heavenly "luminaries, than for the rich to view their golden "roofs."

Thus in the privation of ſome advantages, we comfort ourſelves with others, true or falſe, that we either poſſeſs or hope for. As the body always finds ſomething to bear it, ſince even when through wearineſs it falls to the ground, it there finds a ſupport; ſo the ſoul, ſick and feeble, never fails of ſomething to ſuſtain it; and when there is nothing real, forms imaginary ſupports, on which (vain as they are) it leans.

This neceſſity of human conſolations is not peculiar to vitious men. In ſome degree, the virtuous want their relief. There are few perſons ſo perfect, but they have ſtill ſome remaining tie to the world. Fatigued by a long attention to ſpiritual objects, they are forced, in divers inſtances, to abandon themſelves, and fly for ſatisfaction to their friends, their children, their eſtates; to a field of their own planting, or an edifice of their own raiſing.

This is the condition of man in this life; which may help us to comprehend what death is, with the effects it produces. We ought to look on it as the rupture of all that unites us to the creatures; a general ſeparation from the objects of ſenſe; the cancelling all human ties, and every pleaſure the ſoul found in them; with a total privation of what it loved and enjoyed on earth. When a man dies, he loſes not only what he called his wealth, but the firmament, the ſun, the ſtars, the air, the earth, and all the reſt of nature: he loſes his body, and all thoſe ſenſations that gave him pleaſure; he loſes his relations,

lations, his friends, and all mankind; he loſes all relief, all ſupport, and, in ſhort, all the objects of his ſenſes and paſſions.

Indeed, if the ſoul, in ſome degree united to theſe, finds itſelf alſo united to a God by a holy love, though the privation of the creatures cauſes ſome emotion, yet it ſinks not into deſpair. For this divine principle ſuſtains it; and, growing more active, confirms its hopes of being ſhortly united to, and overwhelmed in that abyſs of pleaſure, which alone can ſatisfy all its capacity of loving.

But who is able to conceive the ſtate of the miſerable ſoul, when it comes, by death, to be rent from all the objects of its inclinations; from all that ſuſtained it during life, and finds nothing in itſelf on which to lean? Its propenſities to love, and enjoy what it loved, become beyond compariſon more lively and ardent, while all the ſoul was fond of, eſcapes, and flies before her with an everlaſting flight, without leaving the leaſt hope of fruition. She loſes all, finds nothing; all ſinks under her, all vaniſhes, and diſappears for ever.

It is not poſſible, in this world, to comprehend a ſtate ſo perfectly miſerable. All one can ſay, to give ſome idea of it, is this.——'Tis a terrible fall of the ſoul, by a ſudden removal of all its ſuppo ts; 'tis an horrible famine, by a privation of its nouriſhment; 'tis an infinite void, by the annihilation of all that filled it; 'tis an extreme poverty, by the entire loſs of that which was its wealth; 'tis a ghaſtly ſolitude, by the ſeparation it finds itſelf in from all union and ſociety; 'tis a dreadful deſolation, by the want of all conſolation; 'tis a cruel rupture, which violently rends the ſoul from every object of its love.

LETTERS

Moral and Entertaining.

PART I.

LETTER I.

From PHILARIO, *to his friend; relating his unhappy amour with* AMASIA.

My dear CHAMONT,

WHATEVER reproaches my paſt follies have deſerved, I know my preſent misfortunes will raiſe your compaſſion.——The gentle *Amaſia* is no more; ſhe expired in my arms, and I have paid the laſt rites to her memory.

Your ſuſpicions were juſt, that I had perverted and ſecretly kept her, contrary to all the friendly admonitions you gave me The ſpring of my miſery was, my father's marrying me, at twelve years old, (O curſed avarice!), to a girl of ten, only to ſecure her vaſt fortune to his family. As I grew old, inſtead of liking, I conceived an unconquerable averſion to the innocent creature: but no arguments could prevail with my father to break the contract; and I was as obſtinate, never to complete the marriage. Thus intangled, I grew uneaſy; which my ſiſter obſerving, to divert my chagrin, often carried me with her to viſit a young lady, deſcended from a good family, but decayed in fortune, and obſcure. Having never met her before in any public place, I was ſurpriſed at the ſight of ſuch an accompliſhed beauty; which her fine genius, and a thouſand elegancies in her converſation, ſtill heightened. Here the guilty inclination began; which, never preſaging its fatal event, I cheriſhed, and reſolved to be happy, in ſpite of the incumbrance

brance of my young wife; who, without any matrimonial cares at heart, diverted herſelf with her babies and play-things; while I, privileged by my ſiſter's diſcretion and intimacy, continued my viſits to *Amaſia*; whom we always found with her mother, the pious and diſcreet *Sophronia*; whoſe only fault was, being a little too reſerved and ſevere in her temper. But *Amaſia* had a natural diſpoſition to books and ſolitude, with a temper rather ſerious and penſive, than gay; which made the ſtrictneſs of her mother's conduct, and her own confinement, eaſy. The little ſociety ſhe had, was with ſome grave and good women of *Sophronia*'s acquaintance, who took care to inform her, that all the men of the preſent age were rakes and Atheiſts; and the young women no better, nor hardly ſo good as they ſhould be; and that converſing with ſuch ſage perſons as themſelves, was the moſt reputable thing ſhe could do. *Amaſia* aſſented to their wiſe maxims; my ſiſter and I being the only acquaintance of a modern character that were admitted to the houſe. I made myſelf ſo agreeable to *Sophronia*, that I got the office of reader to the family; but, to my ſecret mortification, inſtead of plays, ſhe confined me to hiſtory or ſermons, though my accent was better ſuited to the ſtage than the pulpit. However, my fair audience were pleaſed and attentive; and I would rather have taken orders than have loſt my employment. But it was not long before cautious *Sophronia* ſaw through the diſguiſe of my zeal; and, obſerving a greater gaiety than was uſual to *Amaſia*'s temper, in converſing with me, ſhe told my ſiſter freely her ſuſpicions; intreating her, as ſhe valued her daughter's reputation, to bring me no more with her. My ſiſter, who was perfectly virtuous, was alarmed at the diſcovery; and would never from that time ſuffer me to accompany her.

I had now no way to let *Amaſia* know the violence of my paſſion, but by a letter; which unluckily fell into her mother's hands. By this confirmed in her fears, ſhe charged *Amaſia*, as ſhe expected her bleſſing, to ſend back any future billet from me unopened. This ſevere injunction ſhe punctually obeyed till her mother's death, which happened in the midſt of this adventure. She was ſuddenly ſeized; and finding her ſickneſs mortal, ſhe

took the weeping fair by the hand, demanding, as the laſt proof of her duty, that ſhe would, in the preſence of the all-ſeeing Deity, promiſe never to converſe with me, or receive my addreſſes.

This *Amaſia* could not deny a dying tender parent. But, oh! how fatal to herſelf and me was this engagement! how wild was my grief when my ſiſter informed me of the cruel obligation! However, I waited till the formalities of ſorrow due to her mother's memory were paſt; when, with the impatience of love, I haſted to her houſe, and, bribing her ſervant, got admittance, without *Amaſia*'s knowledge, to her chamber.

Never did her charms appear to ſuch advantage. The ſoft ſurpriſe, the modeſt confuſion, the ſtruggle between a tender inclination, and the reſtraint of conſcious honour, gave her a thouſand nameleſs graces. Whether the yielding beauty, with a gentle languiſhment, betrayed the paſſion ſhe had long diſguiſed; or whether, recovering herſelf with all the pomp of virtue, ſhe reproached my attempt, ſtill ſhe put on reſiſtleſs charms: but, in every tranſporting variety of her temper, I ſaw my own advantage; nor left the conqueſt unfiniſhed. With deep repentance I now confeſs, it gave me an impious pleaſure, to find love triumphant over all the pride of virtue. But Heaven ſoon avenged its cauſe, and humbled me in the height of my ſucceſsful inſolence.

I had not long continued my viſits to *Amaſia*, but an affair of conſequence required my abſence for ſome weeks. In the mean time, ſhe was ſeized with a fever. As ſhe found the ſymptoms mortal, ſhe wrote, and immediately ſent me this letter.

" *My dear* PHILARIO,

" WHere are thoſe ages of love, that heaven and e-
" ternal ſeries of tranquillity and joy, with which
" you profanely flattered me? The bright deluſion, the
" viſionary paradiſe, is already loſt; my ſun is ſetting
" at noon; an untimely evening draws its ſhadows over
" all my promiſed joys.

" That immortal bloom, thoſe heavenly charms, that
" you told me might bid defiance to ſickneſs and age,
" are already blaſted by a cruel diſeaſe. A ſudden au-

" tumn

" tumn has withered my prime; the lilies droop, the " roſes die, chilling winter has faded my youthful " ſpring.——But a few days more, and I am duſt.

" This truth ſits heavy on my ſoul, and brings my " guilt, with its full aggravation, in view. My mo- " ther's dying admonitions, my broken vows, terrify " me to diſtraction. My crime was not the effect of " ignorance or inadvertency. Pitying angels ſet the " penalties of eternal damnation, and the recompence " of an immortal crown, in proſpect before me; the " caverns of death diſcloſed their terrors, and the " realms of celeſtial light opened their glories to my " active imagination. I was forewarned, by the advice " of a dying parent, of the infamy and ruin to which " this ſoft temptation has betrayed me. I had expe- " rienced the ſatisfactions of reaſon and virtue. But " for you I ventured on preſent and future perdition, " and gave up my title to all the joys of immortality. " And now, ye regions of divine delight, you have no " attractions for a mind ſo impure; I would only fly " to you as a retreat from infernal miſery.

" And yet, too charming youth! you engage my af- " fections. I would live; but (O fatal madneſs!) I " would live for you. By you I was ſeduced; but, " oh! may your ſoul ſtand clear of my ruin! It is " myſelf, not you, I would accuſe.

" Laſt night, (if waking or in a dream I am uncer- " tain), my mother's venerable ſhade, majeſtic in hea- " venly ſplendor, appeared to me, and bid me *prepare* " *for the ſilent tomb!*——What preparation can I make? " What penitence can atone for repeated perjury? for " crimes againſt the cleareſt convictions of heavenly " light, and the ſanction of voluntary vows?

" What figures of ſpeech could you make uſe of to " take off from vices like theſe their deformity? What " eloquence did you employ, thus to pervert my judg- " ment? By what infernal inchantment was I led on " to mine own deſtruction?——You have undone me; " but I am hopeleſs! Can you make no reparation? " Cannot you reverſe the injury, and talk as well in the " cauſe of heaven, as you did in the intereſt of hell? " ——Oh! make the compaſſionate trial!——Can you

" pray?—Can you implore mercy for me? Perſua-
" ſion dwell upon your tongue! Could you be ſincere,
" Heaven perhaps may hear.—My ſtrength is ſpent!
" —I faint!—Fly to my aſſiſtance, that at leaſt I
" may take a laſt farewell.

AMASIA."

This letter ſurpriſed and diſtracted me. I knew not what I did or ſaid; but I ordered my horſes, and returned with all the ſpeed that love could give me, to the idol of my ſoul; whom I found by intervals in her perfect ſenſes, but in the agonies of death.

The melancholy ſcene will never quit my memory. Death came, attended by his real and fantaſtic horrors; he made his approach with every circumſtance terrible to nature or reaſon. Never was the paſſage to his waſte dominions more gloomy; never did a departing ſpirit quit the light of heaven with more reluctance!

" Oh! (ſhe cried, graſping my hand), whither am I
" going? to what unknown regions? On what deſo-
" late coaſts am I doomed eternally to wander? How
" dark the entrance; how long the paſſage that opens
" before me!—See yonder ſullen ghoſt beckons me
" away!—another pale ſpectre ſummons me to the
" grave, and bids me mingle with the dead.—How
" my ſenſes wander!—O for a month's, a week's,
" an hour's reprieve!" Then, fixing her eager eyes on mine, ſhe aſked, " Cannot you procure this for me,
" after all your boaſted love?—I am cited to the ſu-
" preme tribunal:—have you the hardineſs to appear
" for me?—The whole creation cannot aid me in this
" extremity!" After which ſhe lay long ſpeechleſs and convulſed; and, caſting a diſmal glance at me, with a heavy groan expired.

I could not refuſe this ſad recital to your requeſt, and my avowed confidence in you. It is ſome kind of relief to pour my grief into your boſom, and to excite in your's a generous compaſſion which I know you feel for

The wretched PHILARIO.

LET-

LETTER II.

From CASSANDER, *to a Gentleman at* Venice, *relating the murder of his friend.*

My dear friend,

OH! why do I profane that ſacred title! If you knew me, you would ſtart, as if the fiends below had given you that appellation.——But I muſt unmaſk myſelf, whatever horror the monſtrous appearance gives you. Perhaps ſome ſparks of pity may mingle with your averſion, when you find my miſery bears ſome proportion to my guilt.

Oh! think what it is!——Imagine the dreadful ſcene I would unveil!——Recal the moſt tragical action that was ever repreſented on the ſtage; or the moſt bloody effect of fury that has been really perpetrated in human life.

Why do not the tears that fall from my eyes, ſtain the paper with a ſanguine hue? Why does not blood, inſtead of ink, flow from my pen in diſmal characters, to mark my crime? Why ſhould I expreſs myſelf in the language of men, and not invoke the infernal furies to teach me their dialect, that I may give my guilt its proper aggravation? for mine's a deed of darkneſs, fit for the records of hell;——murder!——execrable murder!——This curſed hand, that trembles every nerve to relate it, gave the deadly wound!——Horror!——confuſion!——Scarce can I refrain by the wildeſt imprecations to haſten that vengeance, at which I tremble.——It will fall too ſoon, and with ſome terrible diſtinction: for mine was a ſin of a ſuperior note, marked with uncommon malignity.

In vain am I acquitted at a human tribunal, by the partiality of juſtice, and the ſolicitations of powerful friends, while by my own conſcience, and the divine laws, I am evidently condemned. What plea ſhall I find againſt the reproaches of my own reaſon, that reſtleſs monitor within? To what ſhelter ſhall I fly from unerring juſtice?——Hide me, ye rocks! cover me, ye mountains, from the purſuit of eternal vengeance!

My ſin was an outrage againſt nature, a defiance of all the laws of friendſhip and humanity.——You dare not believe me, when I tell you it was my friend.——Oh diſtracting thought!——my friend!——the young, the gentle *Antonio*, that I murdered!——I ſee him fall!——I ſee him bleed!——The ſoul ſits quivering on his lips, his eye-balls roll in death!——I behold the gaping wound, the laſt convulſive pangs, the pale and ſenſeleſs corpſe extended on the ground! The dreadful ſcene is for ever new, and riſes before me with inſulting horror. The viſionary terrors haunt my ſolitary retreats, and damp the joy of ſociety. My days are unacquainted with peace, my nights with reſt; the whole creation is an undiſtinguiſhed chaos; the ſkies have loſt their light, the fields their verdure; every charm is blotted from the face of nature; the ſweeteſt odours no more refreſh me; harmony, with its ſoothing tones, no more delights me; I ſicken at the moſt luxurious banquets, the richeſt wines have loſt their flavour; beauty no more invites, nor pleaſure with her ſofteſt eloquence allures me.

Thoſe fair gardens, where art and nature combine to rival all that has been fabled of the vale of *Tempe*, or the *Cyprian* groves, theſe ſoft retreats, which were late my pride and delight, now yield a gloomy proſpect, and look like the ſeats of deſolation and deſpair: for here the bloody fact was done; here I violated Nature's great original law, defied eternal juſtice, and ſealed my own perdition.

You know with what frenzy I doated on the artful *Marcella*. She was the idol of my thoughts: with her I ſpent my gay licentious hours, regardleſs of my honour, my country, or my friends; for her I contrived gardens of pleaſure, opened cryſtal fountains, raiſed bowers perfumed with every fragrant bloſſom, to entertain her: nor once believed ſhe could be capable of ingratitude, till that fatal night when I ſurpriſed her with the unhappy *Antonio*.

I returned more early than uſual from an appointed debauch; and not finding *Marcella* in her apartment, I ran immediately into a private garden, where ſhe ſometimes took an evening-walk. The moon ſhone clear; and at the entrance of an arbour, I ſaw her ſitting with

Antonio,

Antonio, looſely reclining his head in her lap. He roſe, and came forward ſmiling; whether with an air of inſult or raillery, I did not ſtay to conſider: but, fluſhed with wine, and enraged with jealouſy, I drew my ſword, and ſtabbed him through the heart; while *Marcella* in a ſwoon lay cold and ſenſeleſs at my feet.

My rage was ſpent in a moment, my amorous flame extinguiſhed, and friendſhip, with all its force, returned triumphant on my ſoul. I threw myſelf on the ground by the dying youth, ſupported and embraced him, melted into tears, and called aloud on his pity to forgive me. My ſervants were alarmed; and ruſhing into the garden, beheld the bloody ſcene.

By this time *Marcella* was recovered from her ſwoon, and reproached my raſhneſs; aſſuring me ſhe had employed all her art to perſuade him to comply with that fatal aſſignation. She frankly owned he had been long the object of her fondeſt deſires, but that till then he had refuſed any ſecret appointment with her, from a ſenſe of friendſhip to me, and juſtice to his young and beautiful wife, whom he ſincerely loved.

This diſcovery diſtracted me. I curſed myſelf and her, and charged her to fly my ſight for ever, leſt I ſhould double my guilt, and inure myſelf to murder. I was ſo far from endeavouring to eſcape the rigour of the law, that I challenged it, called aloud for the miniſters of juſtice, witneſſed againſt my own life, and avowed the barbarous fact. But however I was cleared by a human verdict, I ſtand condemned by a higher and more righteous deciſion. My conſcience tells me,

——The door is ſhut;
The judge has paſs'd my everlaſting doom,
Which all created pow'r can ne'er reverſe.
My day's for ever gone, my ſun is ſet
In final darkneſs, ne'er to riſe again;
My ſummer's ſpent, eternal winter's come;
The ſeaſon's paſt.——
On me no ray of mercy e'er will ſhine,
No ſmiling beam of hope will ever riſe;
Juſtice divine, and ſelf-condemning guilt,
Conſign me over to eternal woe.

What

What repentance is there for a wretch who can make no reſtitution? The injury I have done can never be cancelled. It was deſperate, it was irreparable miſchief, that I brought on the wretched *Antonio*. I cut off his ſpace of trial, his probation for immortal joys, and tore him from all his future hopes of ſalvation. I perhaps ſurpriſed him with all his ſins and unrepented follies on his head; his guilt might that inſtant be in its fulleſt magnitude, while I, with a more than infernal rage, ſeized the curſed moment, and ſent an immortal ſpirit to hell. He may now be loading me with execrations; and ſounding revenge through the caverns of darkneſs, againſt a miſcreant that barred the gates of bliſs, and opened his paſſage to the dungeons of miſery and endleſs deſpair.

Theſe are the horrible images that haunt, and ſometimes drive me to the precipice of ruin. Laſt night, in a dead and ſilent hour, I took my ſword, and went ſoftly into my garden, reſolving to ſtab myſelf (ſo wild are the intervals of my grief) on the ſame place where I murdered my friend. When I came near, I ſaw, or my fancy only made it real, a ghaſtly phantom reſembling the murdered *Antonio*, ſtanding on the very ſpot where I gave the fatal thruſt; his countenance wan and doleful, his motionleſs eyes fixed full on mine, while his hand pointed to the well-imitated wound on his breaſt.

The ſight withered my ſtrength, and the ſword dropped from my trembling hand; guilt made me a coward, and with a childiſh fear I haſtily retired to my chamber, calling one of my ſervants to attend me. So unlike am I grown to myſelf, I ſtart at a ſhadow, and ſhudder at the preſage of a dream; am ſurrounded with ill omens, and tormented with more direful forebodings within.

We talk of racks, of hiſſing ſnakes, and gnawing worms; but all the emphaſis of human language cannot deſcribe the tortures of an accuſing conſcience. The united force of art and nature cannot yield the leaſt relief. The light of paradiſe could not chear me; the ſongs of angels would but heighten my remorſe, and augment the exquiſite anguiſh: the gloom of impenetrable night, and the ſound of eternal tempeſts, would ſooner ſooth theſe unutterable agonies.

What

What privilege is my being? why am I curſed with immortality? Oh that my ſevere judge, my omnipotent adverſary, would ſpeak me again into my primitive *nothing*, and with one potent word finiſh my exiſtence!

The beaſts are happy; they come forth, and keep
Short watch on earth, and then lie down to ſleep.
Pain is for man; and, oh! how vaſt a pain
For crimes that made the Godhead bleed in vain!

Dr Young.

But why do I think it in vain for me? Am I of all human race exempted? Am I the only diſtinguiſhed ſinner excluded from the benefit of that infinite atonement? Am I on earth, or ſhut up in the infernal priſon? Oh ſtay, thou glimmering beam of hope, with one heavenly viſit chear my benighted ſoul. An uncertain *if*, a flattering *poſſibility*, would be a momentary heaven to me; it would be redemption from hell, pardon to a reprobate ſpirit. And yet,

If I muſt periſh, proſtrate at thy feet
The humble victim of thy wrath ſhall fall,
Imploring mercy ſtill; for mercy reigns
Triumphant in thy nature: 'tis thy boaſt,
The attribute that reigns on this ſide hell.

My dear *Clerimont*, excuſe my freedom. It is natural for miſery to complain. Had I been acquainted with a perſon of more piety and generous compaſſion than yourſelf, I had ſpared you the reading of this melancholy relation, to which your long ſtay at *Venice* has made you a ſtranger.

Adieu. I know you will pity

The wretched CASSANDER.

LET-

LETTER III.

To BELINDA, *from* SYLVIA, *to inform her of the reasons of her sudden retreat into the country.*

MY dear *Belinda*, I am indeed got back again,

To harmless plain-work, and to croaking rooks,
Old-fashion'd halls, dull aunts, and godly books.
Mr Pope.

to a view of Nature in that simplicity which you rally so agreeably. But it is here I have recovered my peace, and am again grown a reasonable creature; to which those godly books that you seem to have such a notion of, have very much contributed, particularly Bishop *Tillotson*.

I see you smile, not in malice, but good nature, at the sober confession, and want of delicacy in the choice of my reading. It diverts you, I know, that I should let *Dryden* and *Otway* lie stupidly by me, and impertinently spend an hour in reading a sermon; that when I am so well at ease in this world, it should ever enter into my head to think of another; and that, in the bloom of eighteen, I should have such a gloomy disposition, as to think myself mortal. And, if you will forgive me, I will own, that I sometimes read the Bible, in contempt of all modern refinements, and hope to form my life on that antiquated scheme. These are, I confess, my dear *Belinda*, a very unfashionable set of thoughts, and have nothing in them modish or polite.

I believe you will be very inquisitive to find what has put these odd, these strange unaccountable whimsies into my brain.

'Tis love! (you start—you pity—you pray for me); but it is love, a tender hopeless passion, that has had this surprising effect! It is an absolute despair of being happy in this world, that has put me on endeavours to secure the happiness of the next. Could I have possessed the idol of my soul, I had been at rest, and had lost the relish of superior joys.

But

But mine, with confuſion I own it, was a criminal affection, forbid by earth and heaven. My bliſs was prohibited by laws human and divine. This confeſſion will ſurpriſe you; but could you know the ſeverity of my conduct, you would excuſe me. I have torn myſelf from the ſight of the lovely youth for ever, though I could have loſt the light of the ſun with leſs reluctance. My haſty retreat into the country was free and voluntary; and not, as was thought, the effect of my father's command. I was ſincere, Heaven is my witneſs, in my deſire to free myſelf from the criminal paſſion; and I thought the moſt certain way to conqueſt, was by flight.

You know, the tour my brother made to *Paris*, brought him acquainted with *Monſieur le Comte de R*——; and when he came into *England*, my brother returned with his family. I was in town, and waited on *Madame la Comteſſe*, who did me the honour to detain me ſome time with her.

Monſieur le Comte was one of the handſomeſt and beſt-bred men in the world, and had as much of the *Engliſh* gravity as was agreeable to my own temper; which made me find his converſation very grateful and entertaining: nor had I the leaſt ſuſpicion that there was any hazard in ſuch a harmleſs ſatisfaction. I had converſed in town with as much freedom as a virtuous education allowed; and kept an equal indifference, without the leaſt inclination to love, or even pretending to hate any mortal man.

The *Comte* was perfectly well-bred; and my vanity made me interpret every little turn of gallantry, as the mark of ſome peculiar value and innocent friendſhip he had for me. Any other thought would have ſhocked my delicacy, and put me on my guard, againſt the guilty paſſion I found kindling in my own breaſt; which, inſtead of oppoſing, I indulged, as gratitude, and a juſt ſenſe of merit.

But I was ſoon ſenſible of the deluſion, and how eaſily vice betrays an unguarded mind, under the ſpecious diſguiſe of virtue. I found this freedom of converſation would prove fatal to all the peace and innocence of my mind, which had now loſt its native calmneſs; and I began to experience all the fantaſtic effects of ſpleen, vapours,

vapours, caprice; in ſhort, an uneaſineſs with myſelf, and every thing elſe in the world, the charming *Comteſſe* herſelf not excepted.

But this ſet my guilt before me in its full aggravation. Envy and deceit had till now been ſtrangers to my breaſt; which made me ſtart at the monſtrous forms. Every new favour from *Madame la Comteſſe* reproached me with violating the truſt and confidence ſhe had in my truth and virtue, and for having a wiſh that ſhe had been leſs beautiful and deſerving. The affection and intimacy with which ſhe treated me, gave me an horror for myſelf; and I was again generous and ſincere, and, as I thought, perfectly confirmed in virtue; till the charming *Comte* appeared; when I found myſelf jealous, unjuſt, and perverted to vice in a moment.

However, I diſguiſed my folly, from a ſecret delicacy in point of reputation, and an unaffected ſenſe of honour. I am aſhamed to tell you I had a thought that needed a diſguiſe, though it was involuntary and unallowed. But I was an ill diſſembler; and have ſome reaſon to believe, the real diſpoſition of my heart was perceived by the *Comte*; who one evening ſurpriſed me reclined on the ſide of a fountain, repeating theſe lines.

Come, bleſs'd Religion, with thy angel's face,
Diſpel this gloom, and brighten all the place!
Drive this deſtructive paſſion from my breaſt,
Compoſe my ſorrows, and reſtore my reſt!
Shew me the path the ſainted virgins trode,
Wean me from earth, and raiſe my ſoul to God!
No more let guilty love my heart inflame!

The *Comte* underſtood *Engliſh* perfectly well. But I recovered myſelf with as good a grace as I could, and put on more gaiety and aſſurance than was indeed natural to my diſpoſition; and, to conceal my diſorder, left him with precipitancy, and returned to the *Comteſſe*; who was in her apartment, reading the ſtory of *Rhetea* in the life of *Cyrus*. She aſked me, *How I liked it?* The queſtion, I am perſuaded, was accidental; but, with ſome confuſion, I anſwered, *That I thought it well told*. However, it awakened my remorſe, and gave me an exquiſite ſenſe of the injuſtice of my ſecret inclinations.

From

From this moment I reſolved to go back into the country, to conceal and conquer my folly. The tenderneſs and unaffected concern the *Comteſſe* expreſſed in parting with me, confirmed my virtue, and gave me a ſecret confuſion for the injuſtice of having wiſhed her leſs happy. The calmneſs and ſanctity of my ſoul ſeemed to be reſtored; and I had left the place a conqueror, if the *Comte* had not led me to the coach, and by an accidental ſigh, and a ſort of a ſerious air in his face, given my mind a ſofter turn, and convinced me of the vanity of human confidence, and that I had triumphed without a victory.

But the retirement of the country, and ſerious reflection, ſoon freed me from the tumultuous effects of a guilty paſſion. The ſcene altered with infinite advantage, and all grew peaceful and ſerene. I am now reconciled to myſelf, and find an ineffable ſatisfaction in the ſilent approbation of my own conduct; a ſatisfaction ſuperior to all the empty applauſe of the croud. I reflect with pleaſure on the happy change. My ſoul ſeems now in its proper ſituation; and, conſcious of its dignity, looks above this world for its reſt and happineſs. I am almoſt in a ſtate of inſenſibility with regard to mortal things; and have fixed my views on thoſe infinite delights which will be the certain rewards of virtue.

What is there here to fill theſe vaſt deſires?
Should Fancy all her dazzling ſcenes diſplay,
Our wiſhes unconfin'd, would wander ſtill
Beyond the limits of theſe narrow ſkies,
In ſearch of boundleſs and immortal joys.

Adieu, my dear *Belinda*. As long as I leave you to the quiet poſſeſſion of the dear town, and its dear joys, you will not envy me all that a gay imagination can form of future pleaſures.——I have truſted you with the inmoſt ſecrets of my ſoul, and know I can depend upon your fidelity. I am

Your unalterable friend,

SYLVIA.

See the ſequel of this ſtory in Letter 5. Part 2.

LETTER IV.

To EUSEBIUS, *from a* Deiſt.

WHere ſhall I find reſt! The wide creation denies it. I have run through all the varieties of human folly, and ſearched every vanity below the ſun: I have tried what was to be found in madneſs; women, wine, and frolic have divided my hours; and I am now trying what ſatisfaction wiſdom and philoſophy can yield. You have made me at laſt a convert to natural religion, and turned me into a ſort of a virtuous Heathen. Morality in its practice is no longer my averſion. I begin to think reaſon and immortality the higheſt advantages of humanity. That there is a GOD, all Nature cries aloud through all her works; and while I am attending thoſe ſacred dictates, in ſuch raptures as theſe I often addreſs myſelf

To the unknown GOD.

WHate'er thou art, thou Excellence unknown!
'Tis thee through all thy various works we ſeek.
Theſe ſecret languiſhments, theſe fierce deſires,
Howe'er licentious, free and unconfin'd,
Purſue unſeen an object infinite.
Through ev'ry fair diſguiſe the leading GOD
Allures our eager ſouls. That roſy bluſh,
Thoſe ſparkling eyes, and ſoft inchanting ſmiles,
Receiv'd their charms from thee. Beauty is thine
In all its conquering powers. In thee
We trace up pleaſure to its ſacred ſource.
We meet thee in the balmy weſtern breeze,
The fragrance of the ſpring, the ſpicy iſles;
And all *Arabia* breathes its ſweets from thee.
From harmony to harmony we riſe,
To that ſuperior ſkill which tun'd the ſpheres,
Gave melody to *Gabriel*'s heav'nly lyre,
And ev'ry moving grace to *Rolli*'s ſong.
Whatever ſacred force in muſic lies,
The dying ſtrain that calms the wildeſt care,
Or loftier note that prompts to glorious deeds;
Th'inſpiring

Th'inſpiring GOD dwells in the myſtic ſound,
And charms and captivates the liſt'ning ſoul,
Through all her ſoft capacities of joy.
But what art thou, the ſecret ſpring of life,
Supreme in all perfections, though unknown?
More lovely than the faireſt of thy works;
For thou art ſtill beyond ſimilitude:
Still riſing with diſtinguiſh'd eminence,
In perfect beauty, and unrival'd glory.
But what thoſe beauties, what thoſe glories are,
No mortal eye has ſeen, nor boldeſt flight
Of fancy in her gayeſt ſcenes conceiv'd.
Some ſoft celeſtial echoes from afar,
Some glimm'ring rays, with a reflected light,
Attract our ſouls, and kindle warm deſires,
Impetuous wiſhes and aſpiring hopes,
Which own no bounds, but, infinitely free,
Break through created limits with contempt,
And ſeek the great original of bliſs.
But, oh! if Love—if Love's the boaſted name,
And darling attribute, reveal thyſelf,
Unfold the heav'nly wonders of thy face,
And ſtand in open majeſty confeſs'd!
Why was I form'd with theſe aſpiring thoughts,
And elegant deſires, theſe boundleſs aims,
That reach at nothing ſhort of GOD himſelf?
If 'tis a bliſs impoſſible to man;
If thou wilt never fill theſe vaſt deſires,
Why were they rais'd? This eminence of thought
Is but my torment!——Oh! recal again
This glorious curſe, this thankleſs gift, my reaſon!
This immortality, my dread! my horror!
Far rather had I flouriſh'd in a plant,
And only reach'd a vegetable life,
Open'd my bloſſoms to the riſing ſun,
And drop'd their beauties ere the ev'ning cloſe;
Or had I mounted with the feather'd race
In heights of air; or with my fellow-brutes
At freedom rang'd the trackleſs deſart o'er;
Slept in a den, or ſtretch'd my careleſs bulk
Secure in open fields, heedleſs of good
Or evil paſt, or preſent, or to come!

Oh, envy'd lot to mine! if I muſt live
Eternal years excluded from thy face;
Be it in earth, or air, or in the deep,
Where thou art abſent, ev'ry place is hell.

The fields and woods are often witneſſes to theſe ſoliloquies, while I fly from man, to converſe with the great Spirit of Nature; for you have at laſt convinced me of a divine preſence, with whoſe immenſity I am ſurrounded. To this conſcious Mind I ſometimes addreſs myſelf: with pleaſure I grow acquainted with this propitious Being, and adore him as the ſpring of my exiſtence. I ſeem to find ſome new capacities of happineſs awake in my ſoul. I languiſh for ſome unknown joys, ſome yet unexperienced pleaſures; and grow confident, that the Power who raiſed theſe deſires, will at laſt gratify them.

That ſilence, that ſelf-reflection and retirement, that was lately my horror, is now become my delight; while I am attending the dictates of reaſon, and ſincerely endeavouring to know the will of that divine Mind, who muſt be too beneficent to leave me in my preſent doubts, while I am ſincerely ſeeking the heavenly illumination.

Thus far, my dear *Euſebius*, your arguments have had ſucceſs. I have the higheſt obligations to you, for not ſuffering me to degrade myſelf into the rank of animals, and for perſuading me to aſſume the dignity of a reaſonable creature. In that capacity, I am

Your moſt obliged humble ſervant,

PHILANDER.

LETTER V.

To Mrs. ———, from AMORET, *giving an account of her criminal paſſion for* SEBASTIAN.

MADAM,

HOW ſhall I begin? What language can paint the confuſion of my thoughts? which could you be ſenſible of, it would be ſome apology for the fatal ſecret

cret I would diſcover. I am yet but a modeſt ſinner; and can neither excuſe, nor dare diſguiſe my guilt from one, who till now has ſhared all the ſecrets of my ſoul.

Oh, think what I would ſay! Imagine what it is I find ſuch reluctance to diſcover, and which I muſt diſcover, tho' it coaſts me all your eſteem! your eſteem, which has been my pride and happineſs. But even that I will reſign, rather than ſuffer you to injure your own character, by a continuance of that friendſhip I have forfeited.

I am not that modeſt innocent perſon you believe me. There is no diſguiſing my infamy, nor recovering my loſt honour.

I know you are ſurpriſed; you hardly credit me: you would fain believe I have belied myſelf; and what I have told you, is the effect of ſpleen, melancholy, any thing but truth. Would to heaven that it was all frenzy, and wild imagination! that I were innocently unhappy! that I had loſt my reaſon, and kept my virtue!

Oh, heav'nly Virtue! thine's a ſacred flame,
And ſtill my ſoul pays homage to thy name.

Ye chaſte and holy thoughts that once poſſeſſed my ſoul, return again! Return, ye ſmiling ſcenes of innocence and peace! Ye ſecret conſolations of religion! ye gentle whiſpers of conſcience! ſpeak peace again to my unquiet breaſt!

I have not yet begun my fatal ſtory.—Oh, let it never be told! let it be loſt in eternal oblivion!——But that's impoſſible; 'tis regiſtered on my heart.

In what dark cavern ſhall I hide my head?
Where ſeek retreat,—now innocence is fled?

If my penitence had obtained pardon from Heaven, the public would ſpeak my infamy aloud. How am I fallen! from what height of reputation to the loweſt contempt! This, to a mind that ſtill retains the niceſt ſenſe of honour, is an affliction inſupportable. I have no refuge from the inſults of the world, but ſolitude; and thither the thoughts of my guilt and infamy purſue me. The country-ſhades, the ſeats of tranquillity and peace, afford me no relief.

Alone through unfrequented ſhades I rove,
And hope the ſweets of ſolitude to prove.
But at my ſight each verdant proſpect wears
A gloomy view; and every plant appears
To bend its top, o'ercharg'd with dewy tears.
What joy can I in theſe receſſes find?
What beauteous ſcenes can pleaſe a guilty mind?
In vain the ſun his morning-pride diſplays;
I turn my eyes, and ſicken at his rays.
The ſilver moon, and ſparkling ſtars by night,
Torment me too with their officious light.

Heaven and earth ſeem to reproach me, and join with the convictions of my own reaſon, which fully approves the rules I have violated. To what has my folly reduced me? Where ſhall I ſeek for peace, when I am at variance with myſelf, and my practice is inconſiſtent with thoſe heavenly precepts to which my mind aſſents?

I would tell you the ſtory of my ruin, but every circumſtance fills me with confuſion. You know my ſeducer, and what a train of artifices he has employed to complete it. You, Madam, gave me many gentle admonitions: but I was too ſecure in my own reſolution, and that diſguiſe of honour, which the falſe *Sebaſtian* always avowed, and never with more aſſurance, than when his flattery betrayed me into this infamy.

Time and place, the evening-gloom, and verdant ſhade, every circumſtance conſpired to my undoing. The whiſpering gales, the falling fountains, the green retreats and flowery ſcenes, heightened the ſoft temptation. All Nature ſeemed to ſooth the tender paſſion, and gave my charming ſeducer new advantages. His form, his aſpect acquired unuſual graces, and his language was all inchantment.

——And, oh! his charming tongue
Was but too well acquainted with my weakneſs.
He talk'd of love, and all my melting heart
Diſſolv'd within my breaſt.——

Otway.

Whither

Whither is my imagination wandering? Ye powers of chaſtity aſſiſt me! blot this guilty ſcene for ever from my ſoul! Let the remembrance of theſe criminal delights no more return! let them be loſt in darkneſs and oblivion! Let me be entertained with more pure and laſting joys, in ſome humble retreat, far from the noiſe and thoughtleſs amuſements of the world! I aſk not princely bowers, or artful walks; let me paſs my hours in ſome unfrequented ſhade, where the images of vanity and ſin may never enter! Oh, celeſtial life! How do theſe peaceful ſcenes ſooth and flatter my ſoul! through what inchanting paths does my imagination ſtray! Ye vain grandeurs of the world, adieu. Adieu, ye idle amuſements and fantaſtic pleaſures. What ſhadows do you now appear! how unſubſtantial to theſe ſerious proſpects of bliſs! Let me dwell unmoleſted here! Let me loſe the remembrance of this buſy world, and hear no more of its diſtracting follies! Here let me attend the happy period, that ſhall untie the band of life; and then,

Let ſome fair ſpirit, form'd alone for love,
That's happy in its full enjoyment,
Tune the celeſtial lute, and gently ſing
A Requiem *to my ſoul, call out my life*
By the ſweet pow'rs of heav'nly harmony;
While on a roſy couch I reſt my head,
And in the languiſhments of love divine
Reſign my breath, and wake in endleſs joy.

In the height of diſtraction, I ſubſcribe,

MADAM,

Your's, &c.

LETTER VI.

From EVANDER, *to a Libertine.*

YOU muſt excuſe me, my Lord, if I ſhould not yield to the conviction of your raillery, nor damn myſelf in mere good manners and ceremony. I muſt confeſs, never was a bad cauſe defended with more wit and vivacity:

city: but I dare not venture on eternal misery, in the gaiety of my heart, nor give up my hopes of salvation for a jest.

Nor can you blame me, my Lord, for being serious in things, which, to my apprehension, are the greatest realities; though, to your politer imagination, they may appear but dreams and chimera's. Till I can change my opinion, I should act unreasonably, to desist from my pursuit of what I think the noblest end of human actions.

As for your objection against my scheme, That it is a happiness future and uncertain; your's, my Lord, has the same disadvantage.

Is there any mortal that thinks himself happy in any present enjoyment? Some uneasy circumstance or other mingles itself with all sublunary bliss. 'Tis some future expectation that engages the mind. To-morrow's assignation with a jovial friend or mistress, depends on so precarious a thing as life; which thousands, before another rising sun, must resign: and your's perhaps may be among the destined number; and in that very moment your expectations perish, and prove as visionary as the celestial pleasures and divine entertainments that you turn into ridicule.

On your scheme, it is but a breath betwixt a man, a reasonable being, the lord of the creation; and a clod of earth, a shadow, a mere nothing. If the machine should keep a proper situation to drink, to sing, to laugh, and dance; a thousand other chances may start up to disappoint the promised joy: which if you reach, fruition itself will deceive your hopes, and leave you nothing but anxiety and remorse.

This is what can never happen to me, though all my bright expectations should prove a fiction. As soon as I reach the fatal period, I shall be past reflection. My gaudy hopes and being will end at once, and leave me for ever insensible of my loss. In the mean time, as long as the dream of life lasts, the very prospect of boundless and immortal pleasures must give the mind a greater satisfaction in mere speculation, than all those fleeting imperfect enjoyments, whose fallacy you every moment discover.

Let

Let my plan of happineſs be ever ſo viſionary, it is noble; let it be invented by the craft of prieſts or politicians, it is ſuperior to all the luxury by which the greateſt libertine ever propoſed to gratify his deſires.

Riches and grandeur, wine and mirth, muſic and beauty, are the height of your wiſhes: but all theſe either fatigue the mind with anxiety, or languiſh and ſleep on the ſenſes. You have often owned to me, that a ſeries of theſe enjoyments has left you nothing but vanity and vexation; and have, in your reaſonable intervals, confeſſed, that theſe are no more than ſpecious names, and ſhadows of ſome *original good*, that the mind, through every diſguiſe, purſues.

This is the ſupreme excellence after which my ſoul aſpires. If it is imaginary, the mind muſt yet be enlarged, by graſping at the enjoyment of infinite happineſs. For I dare confeſs, my end is the ſame with your's: it is pleaſure we both purſue; and as at preſent it conſiſts chiefly in expectation, mine muſt ſurpaſs your's by the proportion of its object.

You have ſet your night for the opera, to hear *Fauſtina* ſing: I expect the period, when the curtain of mortality ſhall be drawn, and the ſcenes of eternal glories open, and angels ſolace me with celeſtial harmony.

The flowery ſpring returns to love, and your ſoft retirement in one of the faireſt ſeats in *England* entertains you; while my imagination wanders through the heavenly paradiſe, and recreates itſelf by bleſsful ſtreams among the trees of life.

You attend the happy period, that, after long impatience, ſhall give the charming *Zephalinda* to your vows; while a diviner flame animates my ſoul, in the ſearch of infinite perfection.

But tell me whence this wondrous flame began,
Ye angels, who behold the face of God!
I call the worms my brethren, and confeſs,
Corruption is my father; yet high as yours
My wiſhes riſe; the ſame divine ambition,
The ſame bright object, kindles my deſires.
O lovelier than the faireſt of thy works,
Nothing below thyſelf, great as thou art,

Exalted

Exalted and ſupreme—nothing below
Thyſelf can ever fix my reſtleſs thought.
Theſe faculties were made alone for thee,
Or I had never rais'd a wiſh ſo high.
Neceſſity of nature leads me on;
My reaſon has no theme, my life no end.
Love, the ſuperior paſſion of my ſoul,
Finds nothing equal to its dignity.
Give all the ſun goes round, to thoſe that ſeek
A happineſs beneath the ſov'reign good;
One gentle look, one heav'nly ſmile of thine,
Has blotted ev'ry charm from Nature's face,
And faded all the glory of the world.
Why doſt thou bid me liſten to the voice
Of Nature, in her juſt melodious round?
Why doſt thou bid me trace the flow'ry fields,
The ſpring's gay verdure, or with wond'ring eyes
Survey the circle of the firmament?
What is there lovely on the ſpacious earth,
Or in th' æthereal round, compar'd to thee?
Compar'd to thee, the ſtars can boaſt no light.
The ſun itſelf, in modeſt clouds conceal'd,
Pays homage to the great eternal ſpring
Of ſacred life, and uncreated light.
Whate'er at utmoſt ſtretch the mind of man
Can form, in its unbounded range of thought,
Of bright, or fair, or juſtly regular,
When fancy launches out to worlds unknown,
And paints beyond created beauty fair,
Still thou art fairer, and more perfect ſtill.

I know, my Lord, you will pardon this poetical excurſion, ſince I have been led to it by your example.

I need not make an apology for continuing to inſult you with my privileges, ſince I have no deſign in it but what is abſtractly diſintereſted and charitable. A place of truſt or honour employs your thoughts, and calls for your perpetual attendance; and when you think yourſelf ſecure of the gaudy trifle, your pretenſions may be loſt by a momentary caprice. But my expectations run higher than any dignity this world can boaſt. It is a celeſtial crown

crown and kingdom that fires my ambition; I am in purſuit of infinite honours, and graſp the glories of immortality.

You ſee, my Lord, in every reſpect, in love and glory, I have the advantage of you. Suppoſe my pretenſions as viſionary as you will, nothing can be more exalted than ſuch a notion of happineſs. It is endleſs and compleat, unclouded with pain or ſorrow; whereas you can never boaſt of being perfectly at eaſe, nor to taſte pleaſure unmingled with many mortifying evils. In your gayeſt flights, you cannot flatter yourſelf with ſuch views.

But this proſpect is all peaceful and ſerene; not a moment's anxiety ſhall riſe, to break the ſeries of eternal joy. Whatever holy cheat laid the plan, it is no diſhonour to be thus deluded. Let poets, prieſts, or politicians be the inventors, a thouſand times bleſſed be the happy genius that provided this relief to ſoften the chagrin of mortal life; when, tired and ſick of all mortal vanities, the mind repoſes itſelf in fragrant bowers, ſports on flowery lawns, and wanders through *Elyſian* groves; when the raptured fancy drinks at the fountains of life, and bathes in rivers of immortal pleaſure!

Death, the gloomy period of all your hopes, in the height of your luxury, and moſt jovial entertainments, inſults your imagination with his horrid aſpect. But this ghaſtly phantom, this univerſal terror, brightens into a ſmile, and, in an angel's form, beckons me away to endleſs reſt. That untried gulph, that you expect will at once ſwallow up your joys and your exiſtence, appears to me a paſſage to undecaying life and pleaſure.

And let it ſtill be granted, that my expectation of future bliſs proves a fiction, and Chriſtianity a mere deluſion; I ſhall be inſenſible of remorſe or ſhame for my credulity; and ſhall lie down as glorioufly with the clods of the valley, and ſleep as ſweetly in my primitive duſt, as your Lordſhip.

But, oh! ſhould the objects of the Chriſtian faith prove true, what a wild hazard do you run! What limits will your confuſion find! Your ſhame will be as laſting as your miſery. You will reproach yourſelf for ever, and be expoſed to the deriſion of the wretched ſociety to which you are joined.——*Il n'y a rien plus réel que cela,*

mi

ni de plus terrible, faiſons tant que nous voudrons les braves.
" There's nothing more real than that, nothing more
" terrible, let us put on never ſo many ſtout airs."

I have, you find, obeyed your commands, and ſent you my thoughts on this ſubject; to convince your Lordſhip how much I am

Your devoted humble ſervant,

EVANDER.

LETTER VII.

From HERMINIUS *to his ſiſter, acquainting her with the happy effects of his paſſion for* CLEORA.

My dear ſiſter,

IT is with great pleaſure I obey your command, in letting you know the diſpoſition of my heart to the charming *Cleora*. To one whoſe thoughts were leſs refined than your's, my diſcourſe would be incredible; but you are a ſort of Platonic, and may perhaps approve the effects of a generous paſſion, and give credit to the reformation it has made in my life.

You will forgive me, Madam, for being once in the right, when I have diſſented from you, ſince it is the only inſtance I have to boaſt of. Had I been governed by your advice, and fled the fair *Cleora*, inſtead of converſing with her, I might have been an unreformed libertine. But ſhe ſet virtue in my view with its moſt charming advantages: I ſaw an angel in her form, and heard celeſtial muſic in her voice. She was the meſſenger of the ſkies to convert me; I owned the credentials, and yielded to the heavenly inſpiration.

You know, my dear ſiſter, that her dawning beauty had made an impreſſion on my heart before I went to travel.

I watch'd the early glories of her eyes,
As men for day-break watch the eaſtern ſkies.

Dryden.

I left *England* with the flattering hopes of finding her free at my return, and with a full intention to make my addreſſes

addreſſes to her. While I ſtaid at *Rome*, that imperial ſeat of vice, the only looſe amour I had, was with a beautiful *Italian*, who ſomething reſembled the matchleſs *Cleora*, who was ſtill the miſtreſs of my reaſonable affections.

But how great was the anguiſh of my ſoul, when, after all my gay expectations, the firſt news that ſurpriſed me at my return was, that ſhe was juſt married to *Philaret!* the man that of all the world I would not have hated or injured; a man that had every amiable quality, and was the pride and joy of all his acquaintance; nor could I forget ſome former obligations his popular intereſt had laid on me. In this exigence I reſolved to diſpenſe with the ceremony of paying my compliments to him, that I might avoid the ſight of his lovely bride; nor did I frequent any public place where I was likely to meet her.

But at laſt the fatal interview came; and in the drawing-room, ſparkling as an angel, I ſaw the lovely creature. From this moment I became an apoſtate to virtue; and, ſecretly renouncing all the ties of truth and honour, reſolved, with great deliberation, to be a villain. This noble deſign was the ſubject of my retired contemplations. With what wild, what impious ſoliloquies, have I whiſpered to the groves and ſtreams, wiſhing the laws of Heaven cancelled, and the ſtate of Nature, in the fiction of a golden age, real! Theſe ſenſeleſs lines have often expreſſed my infamous raptures *.

O ſiecle plus heureux mille fois pour les hommes,
Que le ſiecle dur où nous ſommes!
Non parceque la terre en cet age parfait
Donnoit tous les fruits ſans culture,
Que les fleuves étoient de lait,
Que le miel dans nos bois couloit ſur la verdure:

Mais

* O happy age! a thouſand times more bleſs'd,
Than the hard ſtate by mortals now poſſeſs'd!
Not becauſe bounteous Nature did then yield
Her fruits ſpontaneous to the ſoil untill'd;
Nor that the rivers flow'd with milky waves,
Nor that the trees drop'd honey from their leaves:

Mais parceque l'honneur, ce tyran de nos ames,
Cette trompeuſe idole, & ce phantôme vain,
N'avoit ſur les cœurs un pouvoir ſouverain,
Et ne s'oppoſoit pas aux amoureuſes flammes.

Such were my ſecret extravagances, the entertainments of my ſolitary walks; but in the height of my folly Heaven did not entirely abandon me.

I took all handſome opportunities to follow and converſe with the fair *Cleora*; a favour ſhe never refuſed me: if ſhe had, I ſhould have entertained more hopes, than from the manner in which ſhe treated me. I attended her coach, her chair, haunted her at public places, ogled, ſtared, ſighed, and practiſed all the modern fopperies of love; which ſhe never thought it worth her while to obſerve: and, to my great mortification, I found I neither pleaſed nor moleſted her. All my dumb eloquence and mute addreſs was loſt on her; ſhe minded it no more, nor perhaps ſo much, as ſhe would the frolics of a monkey. I might give myſelf what poſtures and airs I thought moſt becoming, and act the indolent, or languiſhing lover, without interruption: ſhe looked as if ſhe had no manner of apprehenſion what I was doing, or what I intended. My breath had been as well employed, in talking of darts and flames, to the plants and trees; the jargon was ſo perfectly unintelligible to her, that ſhe either anſwered nothing to the purpoſe, or turned the diſcourſe to ſome grave moral ſubject.

And as ſhe had the fineſt turn of wit, and the moſt graceful manner of ſpeaking in the world, every thing ſhe ſaid made an impreſſion on my ſoul; every vice on which ſhe ſet a mark of infamy, though ever ſo modiſh, loſt its credit with me; and every virtue, though ever ſo ſevere, ſeemed practicable with her applauſe.

The manner in which ſhe treated my paſſion, ſet me in a very ridiculous light to myſelf. The vanity appeared unpardonable, that inſpired me with the hopes of rivaling the happy man, to whom, in the ſight of Hea-

But becauſe Honour, phantom of controul,
Falſe airy idol, tyrant of the ſoul,
Then to our am'rous flames no bounds conſign'd,
Then knew no ſov'reign power o'er the mind.

ven,

ven, with her vows, ſhe had ſincerely given her eſteem and tendereſt affections. Whatever regard was due to ſuch diſtinguiſhing merit as *Philaret*'s, ſhe gave him. Nothing could be more ſoft and engaging than her whole behaviour to him. Her modeſty was unaffected, truth and juſtice appeared in all her actions. In the gayeſt bloom of youth, and triumph of beauty, ſhe practiſed the ſtricteſt rules of piety. This, joined to the moſt gentle diſpoſition, and a genius turned to every thing that is beautiful and polite, makes her one of the brighteſt characters of the age.

A thouſand times bleſſed be the heavenly power that kept me back from the ruin I courted; and, by the example and converſation of the lovely woman, made me a proſelyte to virtue, and guided me to a rational and laſting happineſs!

But, my dear ſiſter, this fortunate event ſhall not encourage me to contemn your advice on any future occaſion; and in this inſtance I know you will forgive,

MADAM,

Your moſt obedient humble ſervant,

HERMINIUS.

LETTER VIII.

From BELLAMOUR *to* CARLOS, *relating the ſtory of his love to* ALMEDA.

I Am glad to find you ſo entirely ſatisfied, ſo compleatly bleſſed, amidſt the noiſe and amuſements of the town. I congratulate your enjoyment of aſſemblies, opera's, and maſquerades. But all your boaſted pleaſures cannot raiſe my envy at preſent, nor tempt me back from the country.

My mind is in ſuch a fantaſtic diſpoſition, that I find more ſatisfaction in talking to trees, ſtreams, and echoes, than to reaſonable creatures. I converſe frequently with a row of willows, that grow on the banks of a neighbouring river, and have often called them to witneſs what they neither hear nor underſtand. The ſtreams

are often ſwelled with my tears, without ever riſing to a deluge; and the rocks melted at my complaints, without loſing one atom of their bulk.

But while I laugh at myſelf, I ſhall eaſily forgive you, if you ſhould take the ſame liberty, and enter into the ridicule of my character. You are a lover yourſelf of the modern jovial kind, quite the reverſe of the ſolemn antiquated form of *Paſtor Fido*, *Don Quixote*, and your humble ſervant.

All this raillery is forced, and only uſed in policy, that I may tell my ſtory with a good grace to a man of your gaiety.

You know how the young *Elvira* was left to my father's care by her mother; and, by a contract between both our parents, was, from her childhood, deſigned a wife for me. But neither her beauty nor vaſt fortune have had the leaſt influence on me to make any addreſſes to her. I have converſed with her with great indifference, and thought I had reaſon to believe ſhe had the ſame for me. But my father, in order to make good his engagements, when he was on his death-bed, deſired me to promiſe him, with the greateſt ſolemnity, to marry her. As he had been the beſt of parents, I promiſed him without any reluctance, on condition *Elvira* did not refuſe me; of which I had ſome ſecret hopes. However, as I then had no other inclination, I was in no manner of care whether ſhe accepted or refuſed me.

But when I was laſt in town, and walking in the *Mall*, I met one of the moſt agreeable women I ever ſaw. She was tall, and exactly ſhaped; her eyes large and fine; with ſomething ſoft and penſive in her air; ſomething of thought, of wit, of ſignificancy, which I cannot expreſs. Whether I then met my fellow-mind, that had been paired for me by deſtiny; or whether in ſome preexiſtent ſtate we had been acquainted, I know not; but I flattered myſelf ſhe obſerved me without contempt. I ſpent my time in following, or endeavouring to meet her; and at laſt had made myſelf ſo remarkable, that ſhe ſeemed to think herſelf obliged to avoid me. As far as I could, without being ridiculous by my curioſity, I inquired after her; but left the walks uninformed who ſhe was. I was in a day or two forced to go into the country;

country; where I was detained for ſome months, endeavouring in vain to forget the fair ſtranger I had ſeen.

In this temper I was taking a ſolitary ramble from my own ſeat, till I came to the entrance of a wood that was near the Earl of ———'s park. Here I found, ſurpriſing as a heavenly viſion, the lovely form that had charmed me, ſitting with a *Milton* in her hand; which ſhe was reading with ſuch attention, that I ſpoke to her before ſhe ſaw me. She immediately withdrew into the park: but I followed her, and told her, the happineſs of my life depended on her attention; which, in the moſt modeſt manner, ſhe at laſt granted, and heard the ſoft relation. That little ſucceſs gave me ſuch hopes, that I purſued the affair on every opportunity I could prevail with her to give me. For, as my fortune and rank were ſuperior to her's, which was only dependent, ſhe acted with great caution; and convinced me, that ſhe poſſeſſed all that true grandeur of mind that conſcious virtue inſpires. Her wit, the elegance of her behaviour, with a thouſand graces that attended her whole conduct, ſecured her conqueſt, and confined all my hopes of earthly happineſs to the poſſeſſion of the charming maid. Nor did I fear the leaſt obſtacle to my wiſhes; for I had told her my engagement to my father, and the full certainty I had (as indeed I thought) of *Elvira*'s refuſal; which I now went to aſk, with a perfect aſſurance that I ſhould receive it. Her coldneſs did not ſeem to have the air of affectation, but rather the effect of a ſecret averſion. I looked on myſelf to be a ſort of incumbrance entailed on her by her anceſtors, of which ſhe would be joyfully freed; and, in the gaiety of my heart, made her an offer of my perſon, ſuch as it was, without the leaſt expectation of being accepted; as I was, to my unſpeakable confuſion. She perceived my diſappointment with a modeſt, but tender concern; and put me into a diſorder that I could not eaſily recover.

I knew my love to the beautiful *Almeda* was a ſecret to every body but ourſelves; and if it had been known, I would do *Elvira* the juſtice to confeſs, there was a ſweetneſs in her temper, almoſt incapable of malice. However, I durſt not diſcover the affair without *Almeda*'s conſent: to whom I went in the height of my di-

ſtreſs, to let her know the diſappointment. She grew pale at the relation, ſunk into my arms, and only ſpoke with tears; but ſoon left me, without letting me know her reſolution, till within a few hours I received the incloſed.

To BELLAMOUR.

"I Beg you to forget, and never think of ſeeing me again; nor let any thing tempt you to violate your engagement to a dying father. It would be barbarous in you to abandon the fair *Elvira*, who was an orphan caſt on the protection of your family. Do not entertain one anxious thought for me: I was the care of Providence when I was unknown to you, and that will be my refuge in all future diſtreſs.——— Adieu for ever.

ALMEDA."

I am juſt going to diſcover our mutual paſſion to *Elvira*, and to ſhew her this letter, in hopes that compaſſion will prevail with her to refuſe me; and cannot but flatter myſelf with ſucceſs, from the gentleneſs of her diſpoſition. I am, in all the changes of fortune,

My dear Carlos,

Sincerely your's,

BELLAMOUR.

See the ſequel of this ſtory in Letter 17. Part 2.

LETTER IX.

To PHILARIO, *from the Duke of———. Written on his death-bed.*

BEfore you receive this, my final ſtate will be determined by the judge of all the earth: in a few days at moſt, perhaps in a few hours, the inevitable ſentence will be paſſed, that ſhall raiſe me to the heights of happineſs, or ſink me to the depths of miſery. While you read theſe lines, I ſhall be either groning under the agonies

gonies of abſolute deſpair, or triumphing in fulneſs of joy.

It is impoſſible for me to expreſs the preſent diſpoſition of my ſoul, the vaſt uncertainty I am ſtruggling with. No words can paint the force and vivacity of my apprehenſions. Every doubt wears the face of horror; and would perfectly overwhelm me, but for ſome faint beams of hope, which dart acroſs the tremendous gloom. What tongue can utter the anguiſh of a ſoul ſuſpended between the extremes of infinite joy, or eternal miſery! I am throwing my laſt ſtake for eternity, and tremble and ſhudder for the important event.

Good God! how have I employed myſelf! what inchantment has held me! in what delirium has my life been paſt! what have I been doing! while the ſun in its race, and the ſtars in their courſes, have lent their beams, perhaps only to light me to perdition.

I never waked till now. I have but juſt commenced the dignity of a rational being. Till this inſtant I had a wrong apprehenſion of every thing in nature: I have purſued ſhadows, entertained myſelf with dreams; I have been treaſuring up duſt, and ſporting myſelf with the wind. I look back on my paſt life; and, but for ſome memorials of infamy and guilt, it is all a blank, a perfect vacancy. I might have graſed with the beaſts of the field, or ſung with the winged inhabitants in the woods, to much better purpoſe, than any for which I have lived. And oh! but for ſome faint hope, a thouſand times more bleſſed had I been to have ſlept with the clods of the valley, and never heard the almighty *Fiat*, nor waked into life at his command!

I never had a juſt apprehenſion of the ſolemnity of the part I am to act, till now. I have often met Death inſulting on the hoſtile plain, and, with a ſtupid boaſt, defied his terrors. With a courage as brutal as that of the warlike horſe, I have ruſhed into the battle, laughed at the glittering ſpear, and rejoiced at the ſound of the trumpet; nor had a thought of any ſtate beyond the grave, nor the great tribunal, to which I muſt have been ſummoned;

Where all my ſecret guilt had been reveal'd,
Nor the minuteſt circumſtance conceal'd.

It is this which arms Death with all its terrors; elſe I could ſtill mock at fear, and ſmile in the face of the gloomy monarch. It is not giving up my breath, it is not being for ever inſenſible, is the thought at which I ſhrink; it is the terrible *hereafter*, the ſomething beyond the grave, at which I recoil. Thoſe great realities, which, in the hours of mirth and vanity, I have treated as phantoms, as the idle dreams of ſuperſtitious brains; theſe ſtart forth, and dare me now in their moſt terrible demonſtration. My awakened conſcience feels ſomething of that eternal vengeance I have often defied.

To what heights of madneſs is it poſſible for human nature to reach? What extravagance is it to jeſt with death! to laugh at damnation! to ſport with eternal chains, and recreate a jovial fancy with the ſcenes of infernal miſery!

Were there no impiety in this kind of mirth, it would be as ill-bred as to entertain a dying friend with the ſight of an *Harlequin*, or the rehearſal of a farce. Every thing in Nature ſeems to reproach this levity in human creatures. The whole creation but man is ſerious;—man, who has the higheſt reaſon to be ſo, while he has affairs of infinite conſequence depending on his ſhort uncertain duration. A condemned wretch may with as good a grace go dancing to his execution, as the greateſt part of mankind go on with ſuch a thoughtleſs gaiety to their graves.

Oh, my *Philario!* with what horror do I recal thoſe hours of vanity we have waſted together! Return, ye loſt neglected moments? how ſhould I prize you above the eaſtern treaſures! Let me dwell with hermits; let me reſt on the cold earth; let me converſe in cottages; may I but once more ſtand a candidate for an immortal crown, and have my probation for celeſtial happineſs.

Ye vain grandeurs of a court! ye ſounding titles, and periſhing riches! what do ye now ſignify? what conſolation, what relief can ye give me?

I have had a ſplendid paſſage to the grave. I die in ſtate, and languiſh under a gilded canopy; I am expiring

ring on ſoft and downy pillows, and am reſpectfully attended by my ſervants and phyſicians: my dependents ſigh; my ſiſters weep; my father bends beneath a load of years and grief; my lovely wife, pale, and ſilent, conceals her inward anguiſh; my friend, the generous *Pylades*, who was as my own ſoul, ſuppreſſes his ſighs, and leaves me, to hide his ſecret grief.

But, oh! which of theſe will anſwer my ſummons at the high tribunal? which of them will bail me from the arreſt of death? who will deſcend into the dark priſon of the grave for me?

Here they all leave me, after having paid a few idle ceremonies to the breathleſs clay; which perhaps may lie repoſed in ſtate, while my ſoul, my only conſcious part, may ſtand trembling before my judge. My afflicted friends, it is very probable, with great ſolemnity, will lay the ſenſeleſs corpſe in a ſtately monument, inſcribed with

Here lies the great ———.

But could the pale carcaſe ſpeak, it would ſoon reply,

———*Falſe marble, where?*
Nothing but poor and ſordid duſt lies here.

Cowley.

While ſome flattering panegyric is pronounced at my interment, I may perhaps be hearing my juſt condemnation at a ſuperior tribunal; where an unerring verdict may ſentence me to everlaſting infamy. But I caſt myſelf on his abſolute mercy, through the infinite merits of the Redeemer of loſt mankind. Adieu, my dear *Philario*, till we meet in the world of ſpirits.

LETTER X.

From CELADON, *to* AMASIA, *who had ſeduced him into a criminal love for her.*

TOO lovely *Amaſia!* whither have you led my heedleſs ſteps! into what paths of deſtruction have you ſeduced me? I have done an action which will never bear the reflexion of reaſon; an action that will ſtamp

ſtamp an endleſs ſtain on my character, and with which my conſcience loudly reproaches me.

I have ſinned againſt all the ties of honour and gratitude. The generous man I have wronged, was the guardian of my childhood, and the guide of my yet unexperienced youth. I am entering into the world under his conduct and protection: he has been more than a father to me; never was a truſt diſcharged with greater tenderneſs and fidelity. May Heaven return it in a thouſand bleſſings on his head!——Should he ever leave an orphan like me expoſed, may it meet the ſame juſtice and humanity I have found from him. But, oh! may it never make ſuch a return! Let ſuch villany never ſtain his noble race, nor leave a blemiſh on his name!

Theſe thoughts bring back to my memory all his gentle treatment; awake my young affections, and melt me into childiſh tears.——O, could they waſh away my guilt, and reſtore me back to virtue!

——Yet I'll look up.
My fault is paſt. But, oh! what form of prayer
Can ſerve my turn!

Shakeſpear.

Curſe on the maxims of the world, and that impropriety of language, that would diſguiſe the baſeſt of crimes, with the names of amuſement and gallantry! Let me be ſingular, let me be unpolite, let me be unfaſhionably good, if I can but keep my peace, and juſtify myſelf to my own conſcience! Let me inviolably obſerve the rules of truth and juſtice, be fearleſs, and open to the inſpection of God, and may everlaſting reproach reſt on all the modiſh appellations and refinements that would ſoften the horror of a baſe and treacherous action!

Theſe were the principles in which the injured *Altamont* inſtructed me, and confirmed by his own great example. My mind had been elevated by the rehearſal of heroic actions, and a love to the public intereſt; by a philoſophic fortitude, and the command of my paſſions. Such were the motives that governed me, till the fatal day came that made you a bride to the deluded *Altamont*; from which unhappy period I may date my apoſtaſy from virtue. You taught me ſofter maxims, and perverted

perverted the noble ardour of my ſoul into looſe and infamous deſigns; while you careſſed me with an open freedom, which my early years, and your huſband's affection for me, too eaſily excuſed.

Till then I had been a ſtranger to love; and, thoughtleſs of danger, left myſelf unguarded to all your charms; ignorant whither the growing paſſion led, nor thought the pleaſure criminal which I took in your converſation. But I was ſoon ſoftened into ſin, and unwarily took in the deadly poiſon, while you indulged the guilty inclination, and ſoothed me into ruin.

What infernal deluſion perverted your judgment, when you preferred me to the man to whom you had given your vows? The vaineſt of all your ſex might have limited her ambition with ſuch a conqueſt. If the moſt agreeable perſon, the beſt temper, joined with unblemiſhed equity to man, and piety to God, ever claimed eſteem, he might juſtly challenge it from all that knew him.

But he had a right to your affection by a thouſand tender engagements, and by his entire confidence in your fidelity; not from any credulity of temper, but from his own innate honour, and a ſoul incapable of treachery or diſtruſt. With an artifice which only hell could teach, you have ſecured the eſteem of a man, who in all things elſe acts with the greateſt judgment and penetration.

It was the diſguiſe I ſaw you practiſe, that recalled me back to truth and honour. In your crime I perceived my own guilt, and abhorred the monſtrous part I had been acting. While he, my guardian, my protector, had been fatiguing himſelf with cares and journies, to ſecure me from wrongs and injuſtice; I, in his own houſe, proved a traitor to his honour, and invaded the moſt ſacred rights of his affection.——O that he would appear to my view an enemy, a villain, any thing but a friend and benefactor! Theſe titles confound and pierce my ſoul with the moſt exquiſite torments.

The fever from which I am juſt recovered, was not half ſo threatening to my life, as the expreſſions of his kindneſs; when, with the tenderneſs of a father, and the benignity of a friend, he watched my languiſhing intervals,

tervals, and discovered the most affectionate concern for my life. How exquisite was my remorse! Nothing but the dread of eternal vengeance could have kept me from putting an end to that life for which he shewed such an unfeigned concern.

My crime stood in all its aggravations before me. The secret sense of my guilt, was worse than death or infamy: I abhorred the disguise of virtue, by which I deceived him. No consideration but his happiness, could have restrained me from confessing my villany, and giving myself up to his just reproaches and vengeance. I could have smiled on Death, and welcomed the fatal stroke from his hand, could that have been an expiation for my guilt.

But I had my peace to make with Heaven, and found another sort of expiation necessary to secure me from divine vengeance; so that as much as I was tired with life, death was no refuge; nor could I fly to the grave as a sanctuary. Yet, as soon as ever my health permits, I am fully determined to make myself an exile from my native country, and fly the sight of my injured friend for ever. But,

———Where shall I find refuge?
No barb'rous nation will receive a guilt
So much transcending theirs, but drive me out!
The wildest beasts will hunt me from their dens,
And birds of prey molest me in the grave.

I dare not see you, Madam, to take a last farewel. You have beauty, and I am human; and, after these convictions, should the dangerous flame again kindle, I must sin away all hopes of forgiveness from God or man. Make what reparation you can to the best of husbands by your future conduct. 'Tis the last advice you will receive from

The unhappy CELADON.

LET-

LETTER XI.

To my Lord ——, from a ſtateſman.

My Lord,

YOur commands are very obliging, in giving me an opportunity to be impertinent, by entering into a detail of my ſolitary amuſements, in this abſolute retreat from all the polite and agreeable part of ſociety. It is well I have your gracious indulgence to talk of myſelf, and be the hero of my own romance: for, without vanity, I meet nothing here more conſiderable; nor is it without juſtice that I claim the privilege of perſonating the ſuperior part in the drama.

Indeed I was never more ſenſible of my own dignity. Abſtract from buſineſs or diverſion, my mind retires within itſelf; where it finds treaſures till now undiſcovered, capacities formed for infinite objects, deſires that ſtretch themſelves beyond the limits of this wide creation, in ſearch of the great Original of life and pleaſure. I find new powers exerting their energy, ſome latent exerciſes, which till now I have been a ſtranger to. I have indeed heard from the men who teach ſuch holy fables, (as I then thought them), that the ſoul was immortal, and capable of celeſtial joys. But I rather wiſhed, than believed theſe tranſporting truths; and put them on a level with the poets roſy bowers, their myrtle ſhades, and ſoft *Elyſian* fields. But now I am convinced of their evidence, and triumph in the privileges of my own being. I rejoice to think that the moment I begun to exiſt, I entered on an eternal ſtate, and commenced a duration that ſhall run parallel to that of the ſupreme and ſelf-exiſtent Mind.

This proſpect animates me with a divine ambition, and caſts a reproach on all created glory. The world vaniſhes; its charms and ſoft allurements are no more: a veil is caſt on mortal beauty, the ſpell is broken, the inchantment diſſolved.

You ſmile, I know, and take this for an imaginary triumph, a ſort of cowardly inſult, in the abſence of an enemy. You will tell me, this contempt of grandeur

appears with an ill grace, in one that has the poſſeſſion of a ſplendid poſt in the government. But this, my Lord, is what has given me a juſt opinion of the world, and of myſelf. A conſtant ſeries of ſucceſs and proſperity has convinced me, that the whole creation cannot make me bleſſed. My ambitious deſigns have never been diſappointed: in love, by a ſtrange caprice of the ſex, I have been always fortunate. But whatever pleaſure I purſued, the enjoyment always undeceived, or diſguſted me. Sometimes I was too wiſe, and ſometimes too capricious to be pleaſed.

Why am I not at reſt? Why cannot theſe objects ſatisfy, or at leaſt delude me with a dream of happineſs? Why muſt I ſo exactly balance the weight of evil, that mingles with every good? Had I theſe reflecting powers to make me thus nicely miſerable? I am reaſoning away all the ſatisfaction of human life, and growing wiſe to deſperation. I cannot ſo much as amuſe myſelf with an airy hope. I have tried all the vanities below the ſun, and there is no novelty left to flatter me; I know the utmoſt that beauty and greatneſs can give, and am cured of love and ambition by experimental evidence.

What a paradiſe, what laſting joys, did I promiſe myſelf in the poſſeſſion of the admired *Aſpaſia!* The yielding beauty, by granting my deſires, loſt my eſteem; her charms vaniſhed, her wit was impertinence, and her artifice diſguſted me. This put a period to my gallantries. The women were no longer angels, but mere erring mortals; with whom I converſed on a level, without any temptation to idolatry. Balls and aſſemblies, dancing and dreſs, were no longer the ſubjects of my ſerious application, nor the ſupreme deſign of my being. I no longer intereſted myſelf in the ſucceſs of any modiſh entertainment. With great moderation I heard the grand controverſy, Who ſung beſt, *Cuzzoni* or *Fauſtina?* and I left the important truth to be decided by more capable judges. I yielded an implicit aſſent to every well-dreſſed critic, who affirmed Mrs ——— was the beſt actreſs of *Polly* in the *Beggar's Opera:* and never betrayed any intemperate zeal, or breach of charity, againſt thoſe who diſſented. I knew every beau and fine lady in *Great Britain* had a right to judge for themſelves; and that being

being too poſitive, might endanger the public peace.

But theſe ſoft follies were only diſcarded for more ſpecious vanities. Diſtinction and power, titles and equipage, now employed my thoughts; ambition took full poſſeſſion of my ſoul.———I reached the envied height, and made myſelf glorioufly miſerable. The period from whence I reſolved to date my happineſs, begun with diſtruſt and anxiety. Inſtead of friends, I found myſelf ſurrounded with flatterers, and mercenary dependents. Impatient, and fatigued with the croud, I ſometimes withdrew to my apartment, and in ſolitary grandeur tried what joys the contemplation of my quality and titles could give.———*The Moſt Noble!*———*The* " *Right Honourable!*———Ye potent words! (I cried), " where is your energy?—— Ye mighty ſounds, that " once fired my ſoul! where is your accuſtomed force? " Have ye no pleaſing magic to ſtill the tempeſt within?——Ye boaſted names of truſt and power! why " can you no longer recreate my ſpirits, nor ſolace my " moments of leiſure and retirement? Is there nothing " in the glittering coronet, this popular toy, to divert " me? While I am ſurrounded with the pageantries of " ſtate, and ſee ſo many badges of my own dignity, " why does not my mind elate itſelf, and brighten into " ecſtaſy?" One would think it impoſſible to be ſplenetic, with thoſe fine panegyrics and elegant dedications lying before me. Here I find myſelf a hero, a wit, a handſome man, a virtuoſo; and, to ſum up all, an univerſal bleſſing to mankind. This darling theme, this catalogue of my own good qualities, one would imagine, ſhould gladden my heart, and give me ſome vivacity; and yet really, my Lord, as agreeable as the ſubject of my own merit is, it would hardly have kept me awake, if the vexations of ſtate had not done it.

My late indiſpoſition has given me a juſt excuſe to withdraw from public affairs. I have found a romantic retreat, ſurrounded with a charming variety of woods, open lawns, and flowery vales, in their uncultivated beauty. Here I rove unattended and free, with no circumſtance of grandeur, but the conſciouſneſs of a reaſonable and immortal being. I have the joy to find I can ſtand on my own legs, and move from place to place

with a ſpontaneous motion, without the aſſiſtance of a painted machine, the prudence of my coachman, and the vigour of my horſes.

I have tried what delights were to be found in madneſs and folly, and am now in purſuit of what wiſdom and philoſophy can yield. In the fair creation I trace an almighty Power, and ſee the immenſe Divinity impreſſed on all his works. Inſpired with a charming enthuſiaſm, I addreſs the great Spirit of nature in theſe ſoliloquies.

Ye woods and wilds, receive me to your ſhade!
Theſe ſtill retreats my contemplation aid:
From mortals flying to your chaſte abode,
Let me attend th' inſtructive voice of God!
He ſpeaks in all, and is in all things found;
I hear him, I perceive him all around:
In nature's lovely and unblemiſh'd face,
With joy his ſacred lineaments I trace.
O glorious Being! O ſupremely fair!
How free, how perfect thy productions are!
Forgive me, while with curious eyes I view
Thy works, and boldly thus thy ſteps purſue.
The ſilent valley, and the lonely grove
I haunt; but oh! 'tis thee I ſeek and love.
'Tis not the chant of birds, nor whiſp'ring breeze,
But thy ſoft voice I ſeek among the trees.
Invoking thee, by ſilver ſtreams I walk,
To thee in ſolitary ſhades I talk.
I ſpeak thy dear-lov'd name, nor ſpeak in vain;
Kind echoes long the pleaſing ſound retain.
Reviving ſweets the op'ning flow'rs diſcloſe,
Fragrant the violet, and the budding roſe;
But all their balmy ſweets from thee they ſteal,
And ſomething of thee to my ſenſe reveal.
Fair look the ſtars, and fair the morning-ray,
When firſt the fields their painted ſcenes diſplay;
Glorious the ſun in his meridian height!
And yet, compar'd to thee, how faint the light!
Ador'd Artificer! what ſkill divine!
What wonders in the wide creation ſhine!
Order and majeſty adorn the whole,
Beauty and life, and thou th'inſpiring ſoul.

Whatever

Whatever grace or harmony's expreſs'd
On all thy works, the God is there confeſs'd.
But, oh! from all thy works, how ſmall a part,
To human minds, is known of what thou art!
Fancy gives o'er its flight in ſearch of thee;
Our thoughts are loſt in thy immenſity.

The thoughts are my own; but I am modeſt enough to confeſs the cadence and rhime are borrowed; and, as you are a patron of the muſes, I believed the harmony would pleaſe you. But you are certainly overjoyed to find the rapture is finiſhed; and that, after this elevation, I am compoſed enough to ſubſcribe myſelf,

Your Lordſhip's

Moſt devoted

Humble ſervant,

PHILANDER.

LETTER XII.

To MYRTILLO, *from a phyſician, giving him an account of his falling in love with a fair ſtranger.*

My dear MYRTILLO,

THE engagement I am under to attend the Earl of ——— in his illneſs, will detain me longer in the country than I deſigned; nor is this the only motive that has kept me here.

I can conceal nothing of importance, without a breach of that confidence I have in you; nor can I deny myſelf the pleaſure of telling the tender ſtory of my care.

You will be ſurpriſed, that the perſon who converſed in the *Mall*, the *Playhouſe*, and *Opera*, with ſuch indifference, ſhould turn lover in the country. But it is a ſerious truth, and will not admit of raillery. All my earthly happineſs is in ſuſpenſe, and depends on the ſucceſs of this paſſion.

Nor will you cenſure me, when I tell you, that my conqueror is the lovely ſtranger that appeared in pu-

blic laſt winter with the Ducheſs of ———. I did not ſee her then; and if I had, buſineſs or diverſion might have guarded me from the ſoft ſurpriſe: but all Nature, every alluring circumſtance conſpired here to vanquiſh and inchant me.

The evening was fair, and with Mr *Thomſon*'s excellent poem on *Summer* in my hand, I took a walk, and read by intervals, till all my ſoul was compoſed and harmonious.

Theſe are the haunts of meditation, theſe
The ſcenes where ancient bards th' inſpiring breath
Ecſtatic felt; and from the world retir'd,
Convers'd with angels, and immortal forms,
On heav'nly errand bent—to ſave the fall
Of Virtue ſtruggling on the brink of vice,
To hint pure thoughts, and warn the favour'd ſoul,
For future trials fated to prepare.

In this viſionary temper I had wandered about a mile from the Earl of ———'s gardens and park, till I entered a winding valley, green and flowery as the *Elyſian* fields. A ſilver ſtream ran murmuring along the middle, and willows in equal order adorned the banks. It was not perfect nature; ſomething of art appeared, but in the moſt agreable negligence. There were many little moſſy ſeats raiſed along the ſides of the river; but what pleaſed me moſt, was a grotto, which looked like the retirement of ſome ſylvan deity. I entered, and loſt myſelf in a pleaſing contemplation, till the ſight of the moſt charming object I ever beheld, ſurpriſed me. She ſeemed

Fairer than fam'd of old, or fabled ſince
Of fairy-damſels, met in foreſt wide
By errant knights.———

Milton.

Her ſhape and features were perfectly regular; her complexion clear as the light.——But I might as well paint virtue or harmony, as deſcribe the graces of her mien and aſpect; in which there was nothing of that gay and thoughtleſs vivacity that moſt of her ſex think ſo becoming; but ſomething ſo ſerious and compoſed, ſomething

ſomething that expreſſed a mind within conſcious of its own dignity and heavenly original. She advanced till ſhe came near the arbour that concealed me; and then, ſeating herſelf on the bank of the river, in a penſive poſture, leaning her cheek on her hand, white as the new-fallen ſnow, with a ſoft and graceful accent ſhe repeated the following lines out of Sir *Richard Blackmore*'s fine poem on the creation.

Thy force alone, Religion, death diſarms,
Breaks all his darts, and ev'ry viper charms.
Soften'd by thee, the griſly form appears
No more the horrid object of our fears.
We undiſmay'd this awful pow'r obey,
That guides us thro' the ſafe, tho' gloomy way,
Which leads to life.———

I heard her with a very tender concern; becauſe there appeared ſomething in her complexion too delicate for a ſtate of confirmed health, which was perhaps what led her to ſuch a ſerious thought. While ſhe was going on, a ſpruce footman came to tell her, ſupper was ready, and her father waited for her. She roſe immediately, and followed the man at ſome diſtance. When they were gone, my curioſity ventured ſome paces forward; and, at the end of the walk, I perceived a pretty romantic pile of building, where ſhe entered. But the evening grew duſky, and I haſted back to the Earl's ſeat; and, retiring to my apartment, paſſed my time in writing this adventure; of which you ſhall hear the ſequel in my next.

But I am grown a lover in one fatal moment; and, in this deplorable circumſtance, am

Your moſt humble ſervant,

LEANDER.

LETTER XIII.

To the ſame, relating the death of his miſtreſs.

MY laſt informed you in what a ſerious paſſion I was engaged; but the tragedy is now finiſhed, and

and I am paſt the poſſibility of being happy in this world.

A few days after my laſt adventure, there came a meſſenger from a neighbouring gentleman, for me to attend one of the family who was ill. I followed the ſervant, and found, to my ſurpriſe, it was the houſe where all my hopes were confined. I was immediately conducted to the apartment of my patient, who proved the lovely woman I had ſeen in my laſt ramble. She was ſitting in a chair, pale and negligent, but perfectly graceful in the height of her diſorder.

No words can expreſs my grief, when I found the ſymptoms of her diſtemper fatal. Indeed the diſtraction of my mind was ſo remarkable, that ſhe could not but obſerve it; and, perceiving her own danger in my concern, ſhe aſked me, without the leaſt emotion, "If I "was ſurpriſed to find her mortal?" but ſhe deſired me, "ſince it was a truth of which ſhe was entirely con-"vinced, to ſpeak my opinion without the leaſt flat-"tery or caution."

This true greatneſs of mind confirmed my eſteem, and heightened my concern for her life. But I was in the laſt exigence what to reply. I durſt not flatter her in the common ſtrain of my profeſſion; nor could I imitate that inſenſibility which the young heroine acted, in an event on which the future happineſs of my life depended.

I was aſhamed to weep; but while ſorrow kept me ſilent, the dying beauty told me, ſome intervals of diſorder ſhe lately felt, had made the darkneſs of the grave, and the ſolemnity of a death-bed, familiar ſcenes to her imagination. "Waiting for my laſt hour (added ſhe) "without conſternation, I find this mortal ſtructure "ſinking into the duſt; but methinks I find the nobler "powers of my ſoul kindling into life and immorta-"lity."

What are the laurels and trophies of conquerors, compared to this ſcene of triumph! which now I could have envied. But my charming patient deſired ſhe might try to reſt; and I retired, reſolving not to go from the houſe till I ſaw the event. She lay, as if ſhe ſlept, till the morning; when I was haſtily called, and found her paſt

all

all hopes, but of a few hours life. Her ſenſes were perfect, and a ſort of languiſhing beauty adorned her face, charming beyond all the vivacity of health.

Theſe were ſome of her laſt words, uttered with a faint but pleaſing accent, the ſound of which I ſhall never forget.

" O Death! how haſt thou diſguiſed thy terrors, and " put on an angel's form to approach me! What wel- " come, what tranſporting tidings haſt thou brought " me! I come, thou kind meſſenger of my liberty and " happineſs; I obey thy gentle invitation.

" *When ſhall the curtain fall, and theſe bleſs'd eyes*
" *Meet all the dazzling wonders of the ſkies?*
" *Oh, rend the hated veil, and take away*
" *The dull partition of this brittle clay!*
" *Come, heav'nly day, which ne'er ſhall ſee a cloud!*
" *Come, chearing ſmiles, from the bright face of God.*

" I ſee, methinks, the glimmering of celeſtial light, " and bleſs the dawning of everlaſting day. The ſha- " dows are flying, and the heavens opening their inmoſt " glories before me. In a few moments I ſhall enter " the bleſsful habitations, the dazzling receſſes of the " Moſt High; whom I ſhall behold in full perfection, " exalted in majeſty, and compleat in beauty. My " hopes are unbounded, I ſet no limits to my expecta- " tions; for in his preſence is fulneſs of joy, and at " his right-hand are pleaſures for evermore.

" With theſe tranſporting ſcenes before me, what " glorious mortal could excite my envy! What ſcene " of pleaſure could the whole creation diſplay to tempt " me back? The dark dominions of death I am paſ- " ſing through, not a captive, but a conqueror, through " the ſtrength of my victorious Redeemer, who has led " in triumph all the powers of darkneſs. Millions of " ages of happineſs are before me; the proſpect ſtretches " to an unmeaſurable length; my ſoul preſſes forward, " and calls eternity itſelf her own."

At

At theſe words, cloſing her eyes, with a ſmile ſhe reſigned her breath, and left me,

Your moſt unhappy friend,

LEANDER.

LETTER XIV.

From MYRTILLA *to* HERMIONE, *giving an account of the fatal event of her brother's paſſion for her.*

My dear HERMIONE,

I Hope my laſt letter prepared you for the melancholy tidings which this brings you of my brother's death. I know the relation will heighten your grief, and renew my own ſorrow; but reaſon ſignifies nothing, and proves but an empty name, in the tranſport of ſuch a tender paſſion as now poſſeſſes all my ſoul.

After the fatal time that my father had extorted a promiſe from my brother, and charged him on his bleſſing never to ſee you more, I perceived an alteration in the gaiety of his temper, with a viſible decay of his health; but I could hardly perſuade myſelf love was the cauſe; imagining the ſoft paſſion in a youth of eighteen, was eaſily diverted from one fair object to another.

I was confirmed in this by his obliging and ſubmiſſive behaviour to my father, whoſe conduct in this affair was indeed arbitrary and ſevere; nor could I forbear making ſome ſecret reproaches on ſuch a rigorous impoſition, where there could be no objection made but to your fortune.

However, filial affection was certainly my brother's governing principle; and he ſtill found ſome plauſible excuſes for that ſevere command, which cut off the brighteſt hopes he had of any earthly happineſs. His piety always ſilenced my reſentments, and pleaded my father's abſolute right to diſpoſe of him.

But as much as he endeavoured to diſguiſe his paſſion from me, the incloſed will convince you of the inward anguiſh of his mind, which he gave me the day before he died, and charged me not to read it till his eyes were cloſed in death.

My

My father, in the utmoſt diſtreſs, looked on the expiring youth; but durſt not examine into a ſecret, which would have given him the extremeſt regret to diſcover. My brother perceived his concern, and gave him all the conſolation he could, by owning his paternal care of his principles and actions; and returned him the moſt pathetic acknowledgments, for the reſtraint his authority had put on ſome of his youthful follies. My father obſerved the kind intention of this diſcourſe, which ſtill added to the anguiſh of his ſoul.

"Be ſatisfied, my dear father, (ſaid the dying youth), "be ſatisfied with the determination of Heaven. I "might have dragged out a long inglorious life, load-"ed with infamy and guilt."

Then, taking me by the hand, with a heavenly ſmile on his face, he ſaid, "Adieu, my dear ſiſter; I am ra-"ther falling into a gentle ſleep than dying. I feel no "pain, and all within is peaceful and calm." And then cloſing his eyes, with a ſoft voice he repeated theſe words, and with them reſigned his breath.

The angels call, they call me from above,
And bid me haſten to the realms of love.
My ſoul with tranſport hears the happy doom;
I come, ye gentle meſſengers, I come!
Earth flies, with all the charms it has in ſtore,
Its ſnares and gay temptations are no more.
While heav'n appears, and the propitious ſkies
Unveil their inmoſt glories to my eyes,
To mortals and their hopes I bid adieu,
And aſk no more the riſing ſun to view;
For oh! the Light himſelf, with rays divine,
Breaks in, and God's eternal day is mine.

After this moving ſtory, whether I ought in prudence to let you ſee the incloſed, I cannot determine; but it is not in my power to keep it a ſecret from my moſt faithful friend. It will ſhew my brother's height of virtue, in commanding a paſſion ſo tender and fatal.

I am unalterably your's

MYRTILLA.

This

This is the letter he gave me ſealed the day before he died, with a charge not to open it till after he was dead.

"*To* MYRTILLA.

"*My dear ſiſter*,

"WHatever care I have taken hitherto to conceal "my folly, I now confeſs it, that the fatal effect "may warn you from giving up yourſelf to the govern- "ment of an immoderate paſſion. It was this that "haſtened my early deſtiny, and cut off all the noble "ends of my life.

"My love to the beautiful *Hermione* was ſuch an in- "chantment, that all the motives of reaſon and religion "could not free me from it. The improvements of art "and nature, the love of my country, and the public "welfare, had no ſhare in my thoughts. My piety "was enervated, and the important end of my being "neglected. I lived, and moved, and acted with no "other deſign, but to pleaſe the caprice of my fair "tyrant:

"Till my father, with the higheſt reaſon, endeavour- "ed to reſcue me from the inglorious ſlavery. I was "convinced of the kindneſs of his intention, and how "much he conſulted my honour and advantage, in put- "ting me under a ſolemn obligation, never to ſee the "object of my dotage more.

"With the utmoſt violence to my tender inclination "I kept my promiſe, and fell a victim to the ties of "filial piety and truth. What regard I paid to thoſe "ſacred names, Heaven was my witneſs, and how ſin- "cerely I ſtrove to conquer the unhappy paſſion that "poſſeſſed me. Aided by a power divine, I at laſt re- "covered my reaſon; but my health hourly declined, "and death is now advancing to releaſe me from all the "remainders of error and folly. The ſoft affections of "my ſoul will be perfectly refined into a noble and ſe- "raphic ardor. I am going to the fruition of immortal "beauty, and unmingled pleaſure; I ſhall gaze on the "bright Original of all that's excellent and lovely; I "ſhall hear the voice of uncreated harmony, ſpeaking "peace and unutterable ecſtaſy to my ſoul.

"Adieu,

" Adieu, my dear *Myrtilla*, my much loved ſiſter! " May angels watch your ſteps, and keep you in the " paths of virtue! Make it your ſtudy to ſoften my fa- " ther's cares, and add no ſorrow to his hoary age. I " fear he will carry his grief for me to the grave; but " oh! let him never know the exceſs of my folly. I " charge you not to ſhew him a word of this letter, nor " once reflect on his well-meant ſeverity. Farewel, till " we meet in the bleſsful realms of love."

LETTER XV.

To Mr. ————.

SIR,

THE inſtances of Heathen virtue that you have collected, have ſomething in them, I confeſs, noble and ſurpriſing; and your eloquence has ſet them in their full luſtre and magnitude. But there is a name, the Chriſtian boaſt and hope, that darkens all human glory; and which, with a ſort of pious inſult, may be oppoſed to the moſt accompliſhed of your heroes.

The poem I have incloſed on this lofty ſubject, is a paraphraſe on Mr *Craſhaw*'s *hymn to the name of JESUS*; and there is little alteration of any thing but the language.

A hymn to the name of JESUS.

AWake, my ſoul! my glory, riſe and ſing!
Awake, and all thy ſacred ardor bring!
While for unuſual flight I ſpread a tow'ring wing:
Awake, my lute! proud of the glorious theme,
Let each harmonious ſtring
Tremble with rapt'rous joy, and ſpeak the mighty name!
Aſſiſt me, ev'ry gentle ſound,
Which ſtudious art has found;
You that ſpeak with ſilver ſtrings,
Or ſwell with tuneful breath,
And lend the coward wings,
To meet the face of Death:

You that in the rural ſtrain,
Echo through the peaceful plain,
Delight the groves, and charm the guiltleſs ſwain;
With you that various joys afford,
Touch'd by a ſkilful hand,
Which can the pow'rs of harmony command,
And dance with graceful art along the tuneful chord:
You that with vocal muſic pleaſe the ear,
Your choiceſt ſtrains prepare;
The ſprings which move our inmoſt thoughts you know,
And can their fierceſt rage controul,
While from your lips torrents of pleaſures flow,
And overwhelm the ſoul.
Let all that Nature graceful calls, or ſweet,
In the glorious concert meet!
Purling ſtreams, and falling floods,
Sighing winds, and whiſp'ring woods!
Let ev'ry bird of tuneful throat
Join his free ungovern'd note;
While hills and valleys catch the ſacred ſtrain,
And everlaſting echoes the bleſs'd ſound retain!
With JESUS we begin: his charming name
Shall fill the ſpacious ſong,
And yield an endleſs theme.
To ev'ry note the joyful word we'll place;
Our ſoft preludiums this alone ſhall grace,
And ev'ry cadence artfully prolong.
New ſmiles already Nature wears,
All blooming looks and gay;
The brighten'd ſun crown'd with freſh beams appears,
And darts a clearer ray.
Tranſporting name!
Whoſe accents to the ranſom'd world proclaim
Salvation, and immeaſurable grace,
Peace and good-will to all the human race;
A purchas'd heav'n, an open'd paradiſe,
Unbounded joys, and never-ending bliſs.
Stupendous love!
Can man for this ungrateful prove?
JESUS, the Saviour! what rebellious knee
Would not a ready homage pay to thee?

The

The martyrs glorious train,
Thy noble votaries of old,
In records of immortal fame inroll'd,
Wore on their breaſts inſcrib'd, thy mighty name.
By this, with ſacred fortitude inſpir'd,
With heav'nly zeal and tranſport fir'd,
They ran upon the pointed ſpear,
And leap'd into the flame;
Nor death could in a ſhape appear,
But what with open arms they met,
Deſpiſing all that rage could do, or proudeſt tyrants threat.
Not hell itſelf their conſtancy could ſhake;
Its deepeſt ſtratagems they brake,
Its wildeſt fury trampled down,
And ſeiz'd with conqu'ring hands the everlaſting crown.
JESUS the ſignal for the fight they choſe,
And gave a glorious onſet to their foes.
In vain the pow'rs of earth and hell oppoſe.
"JESUS, our conqu'ring chief!" they cry'd;
JESUS! aloud the ſounding ſkies reply'd.
Exalted name!
From thee the burning ſeraphs catch their flame.
JESUS, the God! 'tis they alone can tell,
What treaſures in that title dwell.
You happy ſpirits that feel its emphaſis,
By this you ſtand confirm'd in bliſs,
And know what boundleſs joys are ſtor'd
In this important word.
The glorious ſubject only ſuits
The high-ſtrain'd notes of your immortal lutes.
Then join the choir,
You bright muſicians of the ſkies,
And with a well-proportion'd fire
Inſtruct us how to riſe.
Let your bleſs'd harps th' imperfect lay prolong,
Complete the bold deſign, and cloſe th' advent'rous ſong

LETTER XVI.

Lady JANE GRAY *to Lord* GUILFORD DUDLEY.

With anguiſh that no force of words can tell,
In theſe ſad lines I take my laſt farewel.
Could I with leſs reluctance part from thee,
Approaching death had no ſurpriſe for me;
That ſolemn proſpect ſhould my thoughts employ,
And baniſh ev'ry tender ſcene of joy.
But thou doſt ſtill return upon my ſoul;
What force the ſoft temptation can controul?
I meet thee ſtill reſiſtleſs in thy charms,
Sigh on thy breaſt, and languiſh in thy arms.
Oh, *Guilford!* 'tis no wretched love of life,
That fills my thoughts with this uneaſy ſtrife,
The flatt'ring blandiſhments of youthful years,
A promis'd kingdom, nor my country's tears.
For thee alone I'd live, for thee alone
I took the fatal proffer of a crown.
No fond ambition ſtain'd my guiltleſs mind,
Inſpir'd with paſſions of a gentler kind.
With thee I would have choſe ſome calm retreat,
Far from the dull formalities of ſtate.
How careleſs, how ſerene my fleeting hours
Had paſs'd in ſhady walks, and fragrant bow'rs!
Pleas'd with the murmurs of a ſmooth caſcade,
Or near ſome cryſtal fountain, while it play'd,
Upon its flow'ry verge, with thee, reclin'd,
My voice I to the melting lute had join'd,
And ſooth'd thy ſoul with gentle ſtrains of love,
Anſwer'd by all the muſic of the grove.
Where rove my thoughts?—Aſſiſt me, grace divine!
This laſt, this darling object, to reſign!
Forgive this frailty of my tender years,
This guilty fondneſs, and theſe female tears.
Yet Heav'n my witneſs ſtands, I would not buy
Ev'n *Guilford*'s life, with one inglorious lye;
Nor dare my tongue, for all theſe ample ſkies
Contain, the form of ſacred truth diſguiſe.
Be *Rome!* be hell! in their revengeful pride,
Their flames, their racks, and tort'ring arts, defy'd!

A thouſand glorious witneſſes have ſtood
For this great cauſe, and ſeal'd it with their blood.
Thou conqu'ring Leader of a ſhining train
Of martyrs, for thy teſtimony ſlain!
In thy victorious name I dare engage
The utmoſt force of perſecuting rage.
To men, to angels, be my ſoul unveil'd,
Nor any part of heav'nly truth conceal'd!
The glorious cauſe that animates my breaſt,
My lips with holy triumph ſhall atteſt;
Atteſt it with my laſt expiring breath,
And ſmile on all the ſolemn pomp of Death.
But darker ſcenes before my fancy riſe,
And Nature, vanquiſh'd, ſinks in the ſurpriſe.
To ſhake my utmoſt virtue, 'tis decreed,
That thou to *Rome* muſt firſt a victim bleed.
How ſhall thy wretched wife that ſtroke ſurvive!
An hour beyond will be an age to live.
But, *Guilford*, keep thy ſacred truth unſtain'd,
And half my immortality is gain'd.
Ye virgin ſaints, that, in your early bloom,
From cruel tyrants met a fatal doom;
That dy'd the honour of the Chriſtian faith,
And boldly trode the ſame illuſtrious path!
To animate the youthful ſuff'rer's breaſt,
Appear in all your heav'nly glories dreſt;
Shew him your ſparkling crowns, the bright reward
For ſuch diſtinguiſh'd conſtancy prepar'd;
Open your roſy bow'rs, your bleſsful ſeats,
Your gardens of delight, and ſoft retreats,
Where gentle gales ambroſial odours blow,
And ſprings of joy in endleſs currents flow;
With ſmiling viſions recreate his ſoul,
And ev'ry doubting anxious thought controul.

LETTER XVII.

Lord GUILFORD DUDLEY *to Lady* JANE GRAY.

MAY ev'ry watchful angel guard thy life!
My lovely princeſs, and my charming wife!

For thee I importune the ſkies with pray'rs,
And waſte the tedious hours in gloomy cares.
Were I from all the world but thee confin'd,
I'd call my ſtars propitious ſtill, and kind;
Theſe priſon-walls would prove a ſafe retreat,
From all the reſtleſs factions of the great.
Sink, curs'd Ambition, to thy native hell!
And with thy kindred-fiends for ever dwell!
Were I, my fair, again poſſeſs'd of thee,
What toys were kingdoms, and their crowns, to me!
Inglorious in ſome bleſsful ſhades I'd prove
The ſilent joys of unmoleſted love.

Why was thy birth deriv'd from ancient Kings?
Our mis'ry from this fatal greatneſs ſprings.
Indulgent love a gentler lot deſign'd,
Nor form'd for public cares thy guiltleſs mind;
Thy thoughts were all employ'd on ſofter themes,
Tender and innocent as infants dreams:
And yet—but Heav'n the title diſallows,
A crown, methought, look'd glorious on thy brows.
In ev'ry look, in all thy graceful mien,
The brighteſt rays of majeſty were ſeen;
Imperial beauty ſparkled in thy eyes:
I gaz'd with ecſtaſy, and new ſurpriſe;
A thouſand times I preſs'd thy lovely hand,
And cry'd, *'Twas form'd a ſceptre to command.*

But theſe gay ſcenes for ever take their flight,
Like ſome fantaſtic viſion of the night.

Oh! could my death the angry Queen appeaſe,
Could that alone a raging faction pleaſe;
Unterrify'd I'd meet the public ſtorm,
And challenge Death in ev'ry dreadful form.
But, oh, what horrors riſe!—thy tender life!—
What wou'd I ſpeak? my lov'd, my beauteous wife!
What counſel can thy wretched huſband give?
On any terms I fain wou'd have thee live.
Forgive my ſtagg'ring faith, my coward heart;
My better thoughts diſclaim this ſhameful part.
What courſe can my diſtracting paſſions take,
When thou, when truth, when heav'n itſelf's at ſtake?
To endleſs darkneſs would I drag thee down,
And poorly rob thee of a martyr's crown.

May

May heav'n forbid!—I'll be thy joyful guide,
Nor ſhall the fatal ſtroke our ſouls divide.
O Death! where is thy boaſted conqueſt now?
Where are the frowns and terrors of thy brow?
Thou haſt an angel's heav'nly form and air;
Pleaſures and graces in thy train appear.
Ten thouſand kind tranſporting ſcenes ariſe;
Oh, come, my fair! they call us to the ſkies.
Beauties, like thee, in Nature's early pride,
Undaunted, for their ſacred faith have dy'd;
With theirs, with all th' illuſtrious names of old,
The *Britiſh* glory, thine ſhall be inroll'd.

LETTER XVIII.

To Mrs ———.

MADAM,

I Cannot ſay you have turned me into an angel; I have too much modeſty to compliment you or myſelf with ſuch miracles: but you have certainly given an elevation to my mind, which I never before experienced. And without any deſign, but doing you juſtice, I may own, that from a ſavage, I am become human; and from a libertine, regular and conſiſtent: from a lover, you have metamorphoſed me into a reaſonable creature. However odd this confeſſion appears, this is making you a greater compliment than ſwearing you have made me a lunatic, and a madman. It is more glorious for you, to be valued by a man in his right ſenſes, than to be ſtared at by one quite out of his wits. My being more reaſonable, does not argue that you are leſs amiable.

For inward greatneſs, unaffected wiſdom,
And ſanctity of manners, improve your charms.
Addiſon.

You have convinced me, that Virtue is more than an empty name, that it is the moſt ſacred reality. I ſee, I acknowledge the bright *divinity*. *She* inſults my infidelity by a thouſand modern inſtances of her power.

Among

Among the youthful and mature, the gentle and ſevere *ſhe* boaſts her votaries. *Virtue* retires no more to cottages and cells; but, ſecure of public triumph and applauſe, *ſhe* makes the *Britiſh* court *her* imperial reſidence.

The Goddeſs *all her glorious ſelf appears,*
When Carolina's *Royal form ſhe wears;*
With ev'ry conqu'ring charm ſhe *ſtands reveal'd,*
While ſubject-hearts *their glad allegiance yield.*

Long may this propitious Queen be the joy and boaſt of a great and happy nation! You find I am grown public-ſpirited. It is you have given this generous ardor to my ſoul, and kindled the ſincereſt zeal for the honour of my King and country. I grow impatient to draw my ſword in their defence, and would commence the hero. Nor will I diſſemble the truth, but freely own to you, that, in my ſtate of infidelity, my bravery was all affected, and often diſguiſed the moſt ſlaviſh terrors.

I perceive, Madam, it is my own panegyric I am writing, rather than your's. Indeed, my character cannot be in better hands. I have certainly done myſelf juſtice, and been punctual in the recital of my good qualities; and, with great modeſty, have thought fit to propoſe myſelf as an example of the reformation of manners.

You will conclude I am in a diſpoſition to write a moral eſſay, rather than a love-letter; which was really my prime intention: but you have ridiculed all my figures of rhetoric on that ſubject, ſo that I am forced to change my ſtyle, in my own defence. But I hope I am intelligible, in aſſuring you I am, without reſerve,

MADAM,

Your moſt devoted,

and moſt humble ſervant,

ALBANUS.

LET-

LETTERS to *CLEORA.*

LETTER I.

MADAM,

IT is certainly better for yourſelf, and more for the ſecurity of mankind, that you ſhould live in ſome rural abode, than appear in the world. Such perſons as you are fatal to the public tranquillity, and do miſchief without ever deſigning it. But I muſt own, when belles and beaus retire to country-ſhades for the ſake of heavenly contemplation, the world will be well reformed. A hermit's life might be tolerable, while the ſerious hours are divided between *Hide-park* and the *Opera*; but a more diſtant retreat in the full pride of your charms and youth, would be very extraordinary. To be convinced by ſo early experience, that mankind are amuſed only with dreams and fantaſtic appearances, muſt proceed from a ſuperior degree of virtue and good ſenſe. After a thouſand convictions of the vanity of their purſuits, how few know the emphaſis of theſe few lines!

Sweet ſolitude! when life's gay hours are paſt,
Howe'er we range, in thee we fix at laſt;
Toſs'd thro' tempeſtuous ſeas, (the voyage o'er),
Pale, we look back, and bleſs the friendly ſhore.
Our own ſtrict judges, our paſt life we ſcan,
And aſk if virtue has enlarg'd the ſpan.
If bright the proſpect, we the grave defy,
Truſt future ages, and contented die.

Tickell.

Nothing is, perhaps, more terrible to the imagination than abſolute ſolitude: yet I muſt own ſuch a retreat as diſengages the mind from thoſe intereſts and paſſions which mankind generally purſue, appears to me the moſt certain way to happineſs. Quietly to withdraw from the croud, and leave the gay and ambitious

to

to divide the honours and pleaſures of the world, without being a rival or competitor in any of theſe advantages, muſt leave a perſon in perfect and unenvied repoſe.

Without any apology, I am going to talk to myſelf; and what follows, may be properly called a digreſſion.

Let me loſe the remembrance of this buſy world, and hear no more of its diſtracting tumults! Ye vain grandeurs of the earth! ye periſhing riches and fantaſtic pleaſures! what are your proudeſt boaſts? Can you yield undecaying delights, joys becoming the dignity of reaſon, and the capacities of an immortal mind? Aſk the happy ſpirits above, at what price they value their enjoyments? aſk them, if the whole creation ſhould purchaſe one moment's interval of their bliſs? No:—one beam of celeſtial light obſcures the glory, and caſts a reproach on all the beauty this world can boaſt.

This is talking in buſkins, you will think. And, indeed, I may reſign crowns and ſceptres, and give up the grandeurs of the world, with as much imaginary triumph, as a hero might fight battles, and conquer armies, in a dream.

In the height of this romantic inſult, I am,

MADAM,

Your moſt obliged,

humble ſervant.

LETTER II.

MADAM,

I Am certainly dead and buried, according to your notions of life; interred in the ſilence and obſcurity of a country-retreat, far from the dear town, and all its joys; which, in your gay apprehenſions, cannot properly be called living. But for me, (who aſk nothing but eaſe and liberty, in order to be happy), I am willing to inform you, I am in a ſtate of exiſtence, and capable of the entertainment your wit would have given me, if you had been ſo obliging as to have filled the blank paper

per you ſent. Nothing could be more nicely malicious; nor is it poſſible for you to imagine, how the ſight of ſo much clean paper tormented me. How many ſparkling things could you have writ, and not exhauſted your ſtock, nor got the vapours by over-ſtudying yourſelf! But I hope you will make me ſome reparation, by the length of your next. I will not inſiſt on your writing ſenſe or reaſon, if that will be any privilege to you. But though nonſenſe from you would be a great novelty, it would coſt you ſo much pains to write it, that I am afraid you would ſend me a ſhorter epiſtle than your laſt. I am,

MADAM,

Your moſt obedient, &c.

LETTER III.

MADAM,

I Have neglected writing ſo long, that I am almoſt aſhamed to own I am ſtill alive. I ought to have died in pure civility; which would have been the only ſufficient excuſe for my ſilence. But really, Madam, it coſts me more pains to indite an epiſtle to you, than it would to write a book to ſome ſort of readers: and I cannot help wiſhing I had more wit, or you a great deal leſs.

Your prohibition of *Lilliput* paper, will drive me to great extremities; and, what I moſt fear, will often prove a ſevere exerciſe to the patience of my gentle reader. I am reduced to a neceſſity of talking of this world, or the next. For the *next*, you are ſo happy at preſent, that you may not be always diſpoſed to think of ſo ſolemn a ſubject; and for *this*, I am entirely ignorant. My converſation is confined to whiſpering trees, and murmuring brooks; and I cannot give you the leaſt intelligence of what paſſes among mortals.

My fate, Madam, is juſt the reverſe of your's. You had a great many things in your head, but wanted paper: I have clean paper enough, but nothing at all in my head: 'tis a *vacuum*, a diſmal emptineſs; and unleſs

leſs I fill the blank paper, with the curious flouriſh of a true-love's knot, I muſt ſubſcribe,

MADAM,

Your moſt obliged,

humble ſervant.

LETTER IV.

MADAM,

THE *ſylvan* ſcenes never appeared more beautiful, (not even in Mr *Pope*'s *Paſtorals*), than in thoſe ſoft lines you incloſed. I hope you will find all the joys that peace and innocence can give, in your charming retreat. Your deſcription has led my imagination through a thouſand inchanting ſcenes. I wiſh you may long enjoy thoſe fine walks you are contriving; not that I wiſh you may ſee as many returning ſprings, as the fair damſels before the deluge; when an inſulting beauty might take fifty years deliberation to anſwer a *billet-doux*, and act the tyrant five hundred years, in the full pride of her charms. But you ſhew no ambition at all of this nature; and I am perſuaded, it is no manner of mortification to you, that your conqueſts are limited to a ſhorter date.

I am going, Madam, to put you in mind again, that you are mortal. I fancy you open my letters with as much gravity as you would a funeral-ſermon, and read them with the ſame ſeriouſneſs. But you ſeem pleaſed with theſe ſubjects; and, amidſt the brighteſt advantages of youth and fortune, are a reaſonable creature, as well as a fine Lady. Theſe ſort of reflexions from me are not the vapours; I am pretty free from the ſpleen, as you know all half-witted people are. But, in the gayeſt diſpoſition, Death would have a diſmal view, and wear ten thouſand horrors, if an immortality beyond it did not brighten the ſcene.

Without this proſpect it would not be worth the while to begin a generous friendſhip. When we have ſeen a few more ſetting ſuns, (for ſetting ſuns ſome people

ple never ſee), when a few more flying hours are paſt, with life to reſign the moſt exalted of human ſatisfactions, would heighten all the horrors of the grave.

I might with leſs trouble recommend ſome good book to your peruſal, and keep this divinity for my own uſe. You will be overjoyed that I am come to a concluſion; and am,

MADAM,

Your's, &c.

LETTER V.

MADAM,

YOur reflections on ——'s death have ſomething in them ſo juſt and agreeable, that I am recompenſed for his loſs, whatever damage the reſt of the world ſuffers by it.

It pleaſes me to find you ſo often returning to a ſubject, that moſt people take ſo much pains to avoid. If immortality is the pride and happineſs of human nature, why ſhould it not be mentioned with the ſame gaiety with which we talk of other agreeable things? The other world is at leaſt a greater novelty than this; nor is it ſuch a glorious round of action, to eat, to drink, and ſleep, that people ſhould have an averſion to think, if not to try, what variety of enjoyments a future life will give them. But to forget this, is the deſign of all the thoughtleſs amuſements the wit of man can invent. What Monſieur *Paſcal* ſays, is perfectly juſt.

L'origine de toutes les occupations tumultuaires des hommes, & de tout ce qu'on appelle divertiſſement ou paſſe-tems, n'eſt en effet que d'y laiſſer paſſer le tems ſans le ſentir, ou le plutôt ſans le ſentir ſoi-même, & d'éviter en perdant cette partie de la vie le dégoût intérieur. L'ame eſt jettée dans le corps pour y faire un ſéjour de peu de durée. Elle ſait que ce n'eſt qu'un paſſage à un voyage éternel, & qu'elle n'a que le peu de tems que dure la vie pour s'y préparer. Mais ce peu l'incommode ſi fort, & l'embaraſſe ſi étrangement, qu'elle ne ſonge qu'à le perdre. Ce lui eſt une peine inſupportable à vivre & de penſer à ſoi. Ainſi tout ſon ſoin eſt de s'ou-

blier ſoi-même, & de laiſſer couler le tems ſi court & ſi précieux ſans réflexion, en s'occupant des choſes qui l'empêchent d'y penſer *.

I will ſtop here, or you will certainly think I am going to tranſcribe the whole book, to ſave you the trouble of throwing away your money on a *moral eſſay:* and perhaps, Madam, you may not be in ſo grave a humour as when you wrote laſt; for all human things are changeable, and have ſometimes good, and ſometimes evil diſpoſitions; and in what circumſtance this will find you, is an uncertainty to,

MADAM,

Your moſt obedient,

and moſt humble ſervant.

LETTER VI.

MADAM,

YOU will find, Madam, to your grief, I have not hired the carrier to loſe the large paper you ſent me; but I have certainly more compaſſion for you than to fill it. One would think you intended I ſhould write a *Weſtern Journal,* and give you a full and true relation of all the ghoſts and apparitions that are ſeen in the county of——; for theſe are the only remarkable events which happen here.

* This is the ground of all the tumultuary buſineſs, of all the trifling diverſions amongſt men; in which our general aim is, to make the time paſs off our hands without feeling it, or rather without feeling ourſelves, and by getting rid of this ſmall portion of life, to avoid inward diſguſt. The ſoul is ſent into the body to be the ſojourner of a few days. She knows that this is but a ſtop, till ſhe may imbark for eternity; and that a ſmall ſpace is allowed her to prepare for the voyage: and yet this moment which remains, does ſo ſtrangely oppreſs and perplex her, that ſhe only ſtudies how to loſe it. She feels an intolerable burden, in being obliged to live with herſelf, and think of herſelf; and therefore her principal care is, to forget herſelf, and to let this ſhort and precious moment paſs away without reflection, by amuſing herſelf with things which prevent the notice of its ſpeed.

Theſe

Theſe are the regions of ſleep and repoſe, not of action. For my own part, I neither hope nor fear, contrive nor deſign any thing, that relates to this mortal life; but am as much at reſt as the people that are ſleeping in their ſepulchres. I am in ſome doubt whether I belong to the ſociety of the living or the dead, and am ready to aſk myſelf,

Is this exiſtence real, or a dream?

I cannot perſuade myſelf to wiſh you any thing but juſt what you are, a mere earthly creature. It would be too great a diſadvantage to find you in a rank of beings ſuperior to mortals. I am ſo ſenſible of the diſtance at preſent, that I cannot wiſh you in a greater elevation. If I aſked any thing, perhaps it would be to ſet you more on an equality, that I might have an opportunity to convince you how ſincere and diſintereſted my friendſhip is.

By your account, L—— *B*—— lives a very unactive and inglorious life. Though he has been ſo long as four months in the world, he has had ſo few adventures, that I can but juſt ſtretch my invention to compoſe half a ſong for him.

Thou pretty, ſmiling, guiltleſs thing!
Of thee what can the muſes ſing?
Unleſs they ſpeak in prophecy,
How great a hero thou ſhalt be;
Thy country's patron, and the grace
Of ——'s long illuſtrious race.

With verſe and proſe, reflections gay and ſerious, ſome with a meaning, and others without any meaning at all, I am at laſt, to your unſpeakable ſatisfaction, come to an end of this fine epiſtle; and am going to ſubſcribe myſelf,

MADAM,

Your's, &c.

LETTER VII.

MADAM,

YOur concern for Lord ——, is the moſt melancholy circumſtance in the account you have given me of his death. The toil, the long fatigue is paſt, and all to come is reſt and endleſs joy. The happy ſpirit is for ever wandering now,

——Thro' boundleſs realms of bliſs,
Where pleaſure bloſſoms with eternal ſpring.

You expreſs yourſelf with ſo much good ſenſe, and true greatneſs of mind on this occaſion, that nothing could ſet your character in a more agreeable light. The death of your friends ſeems to reconcile your thoughts to the unknown regions.

With regard to yourſelf, it might be no diſadvantage to quit the world ſo early. To die in the pride of life, and all the ſplendor of youthful virtue, has ſomething far more glorious, than to languiſh out the dregs of life in the exerciſe of no virtue but patience.

You find, Madam, I am perſuading you to die with great compoſure. I ſuppoſe you think yourſelf obliged to me for reſigning my friends to their deſtiny with ſo much calmneſs and ſubmiſſion: but really it is in mere charity to you; for if you grow wiſe ſo ſoon, I cannot imagine how you will fill up the tedious round of three-ſcore years and ten, if Heaven, for the happineſs of mankind, ſhould continue your life to that date.

How many people would ſuſpend their part in the joys of paradiſe, till the heavens are no more, for the moſt trifling of thoſe amuſements which you deſpiſe! But while you think ſo juſtly of this world, and the next, I muſt confeſs, the manner of life to which your quality confines you, excites my compaſſion. Indeed, you may diſpenſe with me for practiſing this height of charity, while you are the object of almoſt every body's envy. But be as happy as the world can make you, it is all but ſleeping and dreaming; and, as Mr *Law* ſays, "being "amuſed with a vain ſucceſſion of ſhadows."

This

This quotation, you may imagine, is to ſhew my great reading. When I am writing to you, I would indeed ſhine with every advantage; but the height of my ambition is being,

MADAM,

Your's, &c.

LETTER VIII.

MADAM,

I Find it is generally a very ſelfiſh motive that makes me write to you, my deſign being to extort an anſwer. If you had but ſo much diſintereſted charity, as to write without expecting a reply, I ſhould certainly receive the favour with the utmoſt gratitude and modeſty. However, it is well that you indulge my talent of impertinence, and never ſtrictly inſiſt on common ſenſe.

At preſent I cannot entertain myſelf, much leſs you. The creation ſeems to want variety; and I am as much inclined to cry for more worlds, as *Alexander the Great* was; only my uneaſineſs is for the ſake of novelty: for I have little ambition, not enough to leave you in an error, though to my own advantage.

I would not maliciouſly leſſen myſelf, nor detract from my own good qualities, which certainly appear to my view in their full magnitude; yet ſuch is the force of truth, that I muſt confeſs you have given me a ſort of imaginary character, and I am an heroine of your own making; as great minds always ſuppoſe they find in others the ſame virtues they really poſſeſs themſelves.

My letter is of a convenient length; and you will now gladly diſmiſs

Your moſt humble ſervant.

LETTERS to the AUTHOR.

By another Hand.

LETTER I.

I Was ſo far from thinking your letter the effect of the ſpleen, that I am perſuaded it was written in one of your gayeſt intervals. To a mind turned like your's, the thoughts of death muſt be all ſerene and agreeable. I fancy you will be pleaſed with theſe lines, which Monſieur *Menard* ordered to be written over his cloſet-door *.

Las d'eſpérer & de me plaindre,
De l'amour des grands & du ſort;
C'eſt ici que j'attends la mort,
Sans la deſirer, ou la craindre.

C'eſt bien le caractere, le plus beau, & le plus rare qu'on peut avoir: "This character is the beſt, fineſt, and moſt "rare that we can poſſibly have." But the eternal hurry that attends an exalted ſtation, needs a higher pitch of virtue to keep the mind in a proper temper to meet our diſſolution, than is generally attained; and dying in pomp, gives a thouſand terrors to the fatal period.

Had I been born ſome humble villager,
And in a peaceful cottage paſs'd my days,
Far from the guilty pageantry of courts,
In innocence my life had calmly paſs'd,
And with a ſmile I might reſign my breath.

The world has, I think, as few charms for me, as for moſt people of my age; but I muſt own, I feel a ſort of reluctance to part with every thing below, and a dread

* Weary'd with hoping and bewailing,
For love of fortune and the great;
No wiſh or fear of *Death* prevailing,
Its coming patiently I wait.

to enter on thoſe unknown regions, from whence none return to tell us what they find.

Betwixt the whiſtling of the wind, and the roring of a fall of water, I have at preſent a ſolemn and agreeable concert; and cannot help addreſſing myſelf with *Mira* to the winter.

To thee my gently drooping head I bend,
Thy ſigh my ſiſter, and thy tear my friend;
On thee I muſe, and in thy haſt'ning ſun
See life expiring, ere 'tis well begun;
Thy ſick'ning ray, and venerable gloom,
Shew life's laſt ſcene, the ſolitary tomb.

Adieu.

CLEORA.

LETTER II.

WHither ſhall I direct for you? Are you ſtill an inhabitant of the earth, or aſcended to the æthereal regions? Am I addreſſing a mortal, or an immortal ſpirit? In what language muſt I ſpeak! If you are ſtill in this world, I am determined to moleſt you; and I hope this letter will find you in the midſt of ſome agreeable reverie, and chaſe the gaudy viſion from your fancy.

I cannot praiſe your virtue in becoming a recluſe, and getting the victory by a cowardly flight. I would have you raiſe your character, by venturing into this wicked town, and by deſpiſing the world in the midſt of its dazzling temptations.

To read a treatiſe of devotion, inſtead of a new play, and preſerve your ſerious temper, ſurrounded with vanity and diverſions, would be a more heroical part, than enjoying an inglorious tranquillity among purling ſtreams, and flowery meadows.

Beſides, here would be the addition of mortification to heighten your virtue: for you would ſcarce find the crying of *ſmall-coal* as harmonious a ſound, as the warbling of nightingales; nor the ſmell of *ſea-coal* ſmoke,

ſmoke, as fragrant as the breath of opening violets and primroſes.

But my compariſons are ſo much to the advantage of the country, that I am afraid you will ſuſpect my advice to be the effect of envy: and I had as good throw off a diſguiſe, and own that at preſent my way of living is a ſeries of impertinence; and were it to continue,

Far rather would I in ſome humble cell,
Diſtant from all that's gay, for ever dwell,
Than waſte my flying hours, and thus divide
My time 'twixt folly, calumny and pride:
Still trifling, thus debaſe the gift of ſenſe,
And live the ſlave of dull impertinence.

I have not yet had the curioſity to ſee the new Opera. The weather is ſo hot, that I think ſhady groves and cryſtal ſtreams more refreſhing than a crowded theatre. Indeed, the town was never more diſagreeable to me than now. I wiſh I knew whether it proceeds from being more wiſe, or more dull; I am afraid of the latter: for as to an increaſe of wiſdom, I cannot ſay I am ſenſible of it in any other inſtance.

The greateſt happineſs, perhaps, that can be attained in this world, is only inſipid indolence, and not any real pleaſure. How different does it prove from thoſe gay viſions that youth forms to itſelf, when it firſt launches out into the flattering ocean! How ſoon do tempeſts of trouble and confuſion riſe, while nothing is ſo common as the deſire of long life; and yet how ſmall a part of mankind would care to trace back their lives again in the ſame ſteps they did before! though perhaps the only variety would be, to change one folly for another, to quit the playhouſe for *Ombre*, or the gentle ſtrains of the opera for the ſerious contemplation of their own dear perſons in a looking-glaſs.

I am your's,

CLEORA.

LET-

LETTER III.

I Beg you not to write any more on *Lilliput* paper. I am almoſt afraid to open your letter, for fear of finding, after a reſpectful margin, *Madam* at the top, and your name at the bottom, and trackleſs waſtes of blank paper between, for me to fill up at my leiſure.

You will be ſurpriſed to find, that at a time when my health is declining, I ſhould be planting trees, and laying out walks, as if I thought I had two or three hundred years to enjoy them. I need not aſſure you, I have no ſuch expectations; but it gives me an innocent delight, to form theſe ſylvan ſcenes in an irregular manner, and with a ſecret art to imitate nature in her negligent appearance.

I have no giants in yew, nor tygers or birds in holly; but inſtead of them, firs and pines, that grow juſt as nature deſigned them; and ſo intermixed with woodbines, ſyringas, and other flowery ſhrubs, that in a few months they will be a perfect wilderneſs of ſweets.

The ſatisfaction I take in this undertaking, makes me often fancy I am not ſincere in my thoughts of ſoon leaving it. I am as buſy in my garden, and as much ſurfeited with the *grand monde*, as ever *Diocleſian* was.

Sento qualche ſtupidita che me impediſce di godere una vita nella corte piena di ſplendore e cerimonia tanto, che quella chi ſi trova nella campagna ſenza gloria & ſenza turbenza *.

Every plant that flouriſhes gives me a pleaſure, and every drooping tree infects me with languiſhing: I watch every decay among my flowers, as a celebrated beauty would do gray hairs, or wrinkles.

I have two or three ſheep that perplex me as much as *le Berger Extravagant*'s flock did him: and were I to indulge my rural delights, and return no more to the noiſy town, I ſhould fall into the moſt ſoothing and agreeable madneſs imaginable.

* I feel within me a kind of ſtupidity, which hinders me to enjoy that happineſs at a court taken up with ſplendor and ceremony, that I reliſh in a country-life free from pomp and hurry.

Come,

Come, Amaryllis, *come, and with me ſhare,*
The blooming woodbines, and the fragrant air;
Together o'er the flow'ry walks we'll rove,
Or ſit beneath the ſhelter of the grove:
While flocks upon the hills around us bleat,
And echoes to the ſtreams their voice repeat.
Among the willows in a gloomy ſhade
By nature form'd, there ruſhes a caſcade;
Upon its banks you undiſturb'd may lie,
While contemplation wafts you to the ſky.

CLEORA.

LETTER IV.

PEople ſeem at preſent more buſily employed in preparing for the King's birth-day, than for their own laſt; and appear to be in greater anxiety for a ſeat in the dancing-room, than for a ſeat in paradiſe.

I was laſt night with ———. A barge of muſic followed us. But, in the midſt of this gaiety, your letter was not the only thing that put me in mind of mortality. I had ſuch a violent pain in my head, that neither the wit of the company, the ſoftneſs of the muſic, nor the beauty of the evening, could give me any ſincere delight.—If pleaſure be the lot of man, it muſt be in ſomething beyond the grave; for on this ſide conſtant experience tells us, all is vanity.

But this confeſſion has hardly any influence on human conduct: for people in a high rank muſt often act againſt their reaſon, to avoid being thought unfaſhionable; and, for fear of being thought mad by the modiſh world, muſt act in a manner which they are ſenſible is being truly ſo, to keep in vogue with their polite contemporaries.

I cannot forbear thinking with myſelf, that if a being endued with reaſon, and a capacity of judging, (an inhabitant of another planet, and an utter ſtranger to our nature), could take a view of our actions, he would be at a loſs what to imagine we were; and had he no informer, but were to judge by our conduct, he would certainly either imagine that we were a ſpecies who were

inſured

inſured always to live in the world we now inhabit; or elſe, that, after enjoying ourſelves here as long as we could, we were to be inſenſible for ever, without the leaſt expectation of a future judgment, puniſhment, or reward.

You would hardly make an apology for deſiring me to write to you, if you knew how much pleaſure the injunction gives to,

Your's unalterably,

CLEORA.

LETTER V.

THE news of my Lord ——'s death has been ſo great a ſhock to me, that I want all your arguments againſt long life, to reconcile me to the ſhortneſs of his, at the latter end of ſeventy years. I have much ado to think that he did not die too young, ſince he had ſtrength enough to endure the moſt exquiſite torments. I loved him moſt ſincerely as a relation, and eſteemed him as a moſt valuable and faithful friend. My thoughts are continually employed about him; and I grieve for my own loſs, and rejoice at his gain in the ſame moment; and cannot forbear following him with my ſpeculations to the manſions of eternal peace, and inquiring with Mr *Tickell*, in his verſes on the death of Mr *Addiſon*,

In what new region to the juſt aſſign'd,
What new employments pleaſe th' unbody'd mind?
A winged virtue, through th' ethereal ſky,
From world to world unweary'd does he fly?
Or curious trace the long laborious maze
Of Heav'n's decrees, where wond'ring angels gaze?
Does he delight to hear bold ſeraphs tell
How Michael *battled, and the dragon fell?*
Or, mix'd with milder cherubim, to glow
In hymns of love?———

I cannot help fancying, how his ſoul is charmed to find itſelf at liberty, and no longer chained to an infirm body, which continually clogged it in all its operations.

How

How is he tranſported to be admitted to the preſence of God his Saviour! And with what delight (if we may be allowed to conjecture that he remembers her) will he ſee his wife, for whom he has ſhed ſo many tears, in all the pomp of celeſtial glory! With what pleaſure will he gaze upon the ſkies, while they unfold their ſparkling treaſures! and with what joy and wonder obſerve the planets in their courſes, and look into all the deep philoſophy of heaven! with what attention liſten to the ſongs of angels, while they tune their golden lyres to the praiſe of God and of the Lamb! And how will his heart overflow with gratitude to his Saviour, while he reflects on what he ſuffered to purchaſe theſe pleaſures for him!

When I conſider the advantages of his change, I blame my grief: And yet who can forbear to lament the beſt of friends, the honeſteſt of men, and the moſt agreeable companion that ever was; eſpecially in an age like this, where ſo little honour, friendſhip, and ſincerity are to be found? But I am not going to write a ſatyr upon mankind, and therefore will ſay no more, but that

I am faithfully your's,

CLEORA.

LETTER VI.

To CLORINDA.

YOU aſk me, my dear *Clorinda*, what is the reaſon of the deep melancholy you obſerve in me? and are amazed to ſee how little reliſh I have for the things which amuſe other people of my age and quality. Your partiality for me makes you fancy that my indifference is the reſult of a good underſtanding; and that the force of my judgment has been able to ſubdue my paſſions. But, alas! how are you miſtaken! My melancholy proceeds from the irregularity of my affections: love, vanity, diſtruſt, a nd repentance, conſpire to rack me; and,

When I look back on ll my former days,
The only comfort the review affords,

Is,

Is, that they are paſt.———
For through their courſe I cannot recollect
One free from ſorrow, guilt, or diſappointment:
Yet heedleſs ſtill through the ſame paths I ſtray,
And raſhly venture on the dang'rous road;
With open eyes, like one aſleep I walk,
And drink the cup, although I know 'tis poiſon'd.
Why am I led thus captive by my will,
While Reaſon, faithful guide, for ever warns
My drowſy ſoul, to ſhun impending danger?
This night may be my laſt; I ne'er again
May ſee the dawning of another morn:
Shall I forego the joys of heav'n, to ſooth
A wayward fancy, or deſtructive paſſion?
Ah, no! let ev'ry faculty unite
To break the yoke! Reaſon, reſume thy ſway,
And calm theſe wild diſorders of my breaſt!
Whiſper thy ſacred dictates to my heart,
And bend it to th' obſervance of thy laws!
Inſpire my ſoul with ev'ry heav'nly thought,
And ſhew me Wiſdom's paths! direct my ſteps,
Nor leave me thus benighted!

There is not in nature a greater contradiction than my thoughts and actions; and it is impoſſible for me to account why they are ſo. I purſue the pleaſures of the world, at the ſame time that I know them to be fleeting and worthleſs. I diſtract myſelf about the opinion of the public, tho' I deſpiſe the injuſtice of its cenſures. I cannot forbear repining at my unhappy circumſtances, in ſuffering myſelf to be tormented with the ingratitude of ſome whom I thought my friends; nor weeping, while I indulge a hopeleſs paſſion; tho' I know that

Quickly will my glaſs of life be run,
And with it all my joys and ſorrows gone.
Then I no more ſhall feel love's cruel fire,
But cold and peaceful to the grave retire;
No more ſhall weep for the licentious wrongs
Of judgments raſh, or ſcourge of ſland'rous tongues.

And yet, not even this reflexion can arm me with patience. I am uneaſy with my faults, without correcting

them; and in love with my duty, without practiſing it. I act contrary to my higheſt reaſon, and turn rebel to the authority of my own judgment.

After this account of me, you will not wonder that I retire as much as I can from noiſe and hurry; though no ſhade is gloomy enough to hide my folly from my eyes, nor any retreat calm enough to lull my paſſions. However, I do not yet deſpair of conquering theſe vexations, by the aſſiſtance of religion, and the grace of that God who will always be found by thoſe who ſeek him, in an humble ſenſe of their own unworthineſs, and a firm reliance upon his mercy.

I am never in ſo whimſical a ſituation of mind, in the midſt of all my abſurdities, as to forget that I am, by a thouſand obligations,

Your faithful friend,
and obliged ſervant,
IRIS.

LETTER VII.

To ALMIRA.

My dear ALMIRA,

YOU will be extremely afflicted, though not ſurpriſed, to hear, that, after languiſhing ſo many months, the unhappy *Teraminta* yeſterday expired in my arms. The day before her death, ſhe ordered every body, but me, to leave the room; and deſired me to ſit down by her bed-ſide. Then, taking me by the hand, ſhe ſpoke to me in the following manner.

I ſee, my faithful *Æmilia*, that you are ſinking under the affliction which you ſuffer, to find, that a few hours will deprive you not only of a ſincere and tender friend, but of a perſon whom your partiality inclines you to believe has ſome merit. I cannot leave you under this miſtake; and go out of the world with the guilt of deceiving you. It is not poſſible for me to let you waſte your tears for a wretch, who is unworthy of them. Yet let what I have ſuffered for my crimes, induce you to compaſſion, and my hard fate warn you to guard againſt

gainſt the firſt glimmerings of a guilty paſſion: for that has been my ruin. You know I was married extremely young, and upon the faſhionable unhappy views of eſtate and titles. However, my huſband's merit, (which, to my eternal confuſion, I muſt ever acknowledge), joined to his fondneſs for me, gained ſo far upon my heart, that, if I had not all the paſſion that attends love, I had all the tenderneſs of an exalted friendſhip for him. In this calm ſtate I paſſed the firſt ſix years of our marriage; and had ſeveral children by him. But then his public employment obliged him to inquire for a perſon to aſſiſt him in the diſcharge of his office. He had a young man recommended to him for that purpoſe; whom he took into his houſe. He had ten thouſand good qualities. He was juſt three and twenty, and perfectly beautiful; at leaſt, to me he appeared ſo. But why ſhould I deſcribe him to you, or ſtrive to conceal the temptation, while I own the guilt? You know the deſtroyer of my peace and his own. It is the wretched *Alonzo*. He had not been long in the family, before I began to have an affection for him, that frighted me. His name affected me. I could not hear him mentioned, without trembling; or ſee him unexpectedly, without becoming as pale as aſhes; and, in a few months, I found my heart was entirely given up to him. What eloquence can expreſs my grief at this diſcovery! My vows, my huſband's merit, my family, my fame, now appeared to me in their full force, and joined to rack me. I paſſed my nights in tears; and roſe more weary than I lay down. I flew to religious books for ſuccour, but in vain; I had neglected the danger till it was irretrievable. I wandered in my houſe and gardens more lik a guilty ghoſt than a living creature. And, to add to my diſtreſs, I obſerved an unuſual melancholy in the face of my dear *Alonzo*. He was always in my way, alone and penſive. One evening, as I was ſtanding juſt without the door, in the court before my houſe, obſerving the moon and ſtars, which were ſhining in their full ſplendor, and wiſhing myſelf above thoſe glittering luminaries, that I might be no longer ſubject to that criminal paſſion which rendered my life a burden, I chanced to put my hands behind me. I had not ſtood long

in that poſture, before I thought I felt ſomething gently touch my hand; and, looking round, I found it to be *Alonzo*; who, ſeeing me about to leave him, took one of my hands, and, holding it betwixt his, preſſed it to his boſom, with an air of tenderneſs which pierced my very ſoul. However, I was enough miſtreſs of myſelf to aſk him, what behaviour of mine had encouraged him to hope, that I would endure ſo unaccountable an inſolence? He told me, that what he did was not the effect of hope, but of abſolute deſpair; that his miſery was grown to ſuch an height, that it was incapable of receiving any aggravation; and that though he loved me to diſtraction, he did not even entertain a wiſh, that I ſhould return a paſſion ſo much below me; and that if I could forgive the frenzy that had brought him to make this declaration, he would for the future obſerve an eternal ſilence. At theſe words he burſt into tears; and I left him with the utmoſt precipitation, to conceal a tenderneſs which neither the obligations of my duty, or any other reflexion, were ſtrong enough to ſuppreſs. I was now ſunk to the depth of miſery. I had liſtened to the declaration of a love forbidden by all the laws of heaven and earth, and contrary to every principle of virtue which my education had inſtilled into my ſoul. I knew not what method to take to free myſelf and *Alonzo* from ſo unhappy a ſituation. Sometimes I reſolved to feign ſome cauſe of diſlike, and prevail with my huſband to diſcharge him. When I had ſummoned all my aids of virtue, modeſty, and pride, and fancied myſelf able to make the dreadful propoſal, my paſſion brought back his idea to my heart, with all the charms of his mind and perſon, and repreſented him not only ruined in his peace, but in his fortune, by my ſeverity. Several months paſſed in this ſtate of anxiety, and he religiouſly obſerved his word, nor ever once mentioned his paſſion; but at laſt the diſorder of his mind threw him into a fever, and his life was deſpaired of. Judge what I endured upon this occaſion. However, conſcious modeſty hindered me from going near him in his illneſs, which laſted almoſt a fortnight. But at laſt his youth, and the ſtrength of his conſtitution, overcame his diſeaſe, and he was able to get up the ſtairs that led to my apartment,

apartment, and was at the door of it juſt as I went to call ſome of the ſervants. At that moment every good angel left me, and I could not forbear expreſſing my joy to find him able to leave his bed. *Alas!* ſaid he, *why do you wiſh my miſery prolonged? Death is my only road to peace, ſince I am hated by you.* Theſe words, joined with the paleneſs of his looks, diſarmed all my reſolutions; and I told him a ſecret, which I ought rather to have died than have uttered. I owned my paſſion, and begged him to live for my ſake, if not for his own. He was amazed and overjoyed at this confeſſion, and ſoon recovered his health. We now went on in a thoughtleſs road of pleaſure, and indulged our mutual paſſion, till at laſt he preſſed me to give him the moſt guilty proofs of it; and ſtrengthened his intreaties with all the arguments that ſo good an underſtanding, aſſiſted by the powers of hell, could inſpire. But as paſſionately as I loved him, he could not, with all his eloquence, eraſe the ſentiments of innate virtue, and convictions of religion, from my ſoul. I was not enough abandoned, but to look on adultery as a point of horror not to be outlived: and though I allowed him liberties, which I am now convinced were guilty, yet I always kept myſelf from the laſt ſteps of vice; and was ſo happy, that, inſtead of my yielding to his arguments, he was convinced by mine, and aſked pardon of God and me for the criminal deſign he had purſued. We now reſolved, by the ſtrictneſs of our lives, to make what amends we could for the errors we had fallen into; and for theſe laſt three years have applied ourſelves ſeriouſly to the ſecuring of our ſalvation. But we have never been able to conquer our unhappy paſſion, though we have ſuppreſſed the effects of it. It is this eternal contradiction, joined to the remorſe I feel for my ingratitude to the beſt of huſbands, which has brought me into the condition you ſee. Happy, if, by loſing my life, I could atone for my injuſtice! How gentle would my agonies appear, if, by their exceſs, I could hope, that they would be accepted as part of my puniſhment! Whatever I could ſuffer here would be joyful to me, were I ſure it could intitle me to mercy hereafter. Here ſhe fell into a ſwoon; but quickly revived, and lived till next

day. About an hour before ſhe died, ſhe ſent for her huſband and children, and took leave of them with great tenderneſs; and then, lying down as if ſhe would ſleep, expired in a few minutes. They are in vaſt affliction for her. But no words can paint the deſpair of *Alonzo*. He has neither ſpoke nor ate ſince her death; and ſeems ſo perfectly ſtupified, that I fear his ſenſes are gone for ever.

Adieu, my dear *Almira!* My tears flow ſo faſt, that I can write no more.

ÆMILIA.

LETTER VIII.

By the ſame hand.

My LORD,

I Have at laſt taken the only means left me, to free myſelf from your importunities, and the weakneſs of my own heart, which argued but too much on your ſide. I found my fame, and every other conſideration, too light, when weighed in the balance againſt your love: but the force of religion has turned the ſcale, and made me reſolve to ſpend the remainder of my weeping days in a convent. It is in that holy retreat that I hope to find the peace which I loſt in the world. You cannot be ſorry for this reſolution, when you conſider of it. For not all the polite maxims of the preſent age are ſufficient to diſcountenance virtue, or bring vice into reputation; or could they prevail in this world, would they be admitted at God's tribunal. Your Lordſhip may call this bigotry, or any other name, which the levity of your fancy, or modiſh principles, can inſpire you with; but a day will come, in which you will find it ſacred truth; and you will be glad, that, by ſhutting myſelf for ever from your ſight, I hindered you from the guilt you have purſued, and put it out of your power to ruin me. It would be no very pleaſing reflexion on your death-bed, that you had ſeduced a ſoul from the paths of peace and virtue; and, to give yourſelf a faſhionable liberty, had entailed miſery and infa-

my

my on a family who have ſerved you with zeal and affection. What has my aged father left undone to ſupport your intereſt in the country? With what tenderneſs did my mother educate your two young ſiſters, who were committed to her care? And, in return, you would bring their only daughter to the laſt degree of ſin and ſhame. This may be genteel, but ſurely it is not noble. How falſe are your ſentiments of honour and juſtice! You thought it would be a reflexion on your character, to marry into a family ſo much below you in birth and fortune; but are not aſhamed to return a thouſand obligations (pardon me, my Lord; for, great as you are, I muſt call them ſuch) with the higheſt injury. And though you have not ſucceeded in your guilt as to that, you robbed two ancient ſervants, nay, friends of your's, of the joy of their eyes, and delight of their age, their only child; who, by your licentious love, is forced to ſeclude herſelf from them, and the whole world, for ever. I dread to think how they will ſupport this affliction. I left a letter on the table to acquaint my mother with my retreat; but concealed the cauſe, for your ſiſters ſake; ſince ſhe might perhaps reſolve to diſcharge herſelf from an office, which ſhe has executed with ſo much care, and has produced her ſo cruel a requital. Let the ſorrow you brought upon my parents content you, and do not carry ruin into another family. Why ſhould you employ the fineſt underſtanding, and the moſt graceful perſon, to promote the cauſe of hell? And why muſt the rank, power, and wealth, which were given you to diffuſe happineſs all round you, only ſerve to make you capable of ſplendid miſchief?

I am now in a ſanctuary, where I cannot be the entertainment of your idle hours; and where the time I ſpent in liſtening to you, ſhall now be employed in praying for your reformation. The tears which I have often poured out in vain, to diſſuade you from your guilty enterpriſe, ſhall be ſhed before God for your ſins. For though you have uſed me with the utmoſt cruelty, your eternal welfare will always be the tendereſt concern of

The unhappy ANASTASIA.

LET-

LETTER IX.

To LEONORA.

I Have been on the very borders of the grave, and have for ſeveral months endured all the pains and languiſhments of a dangerous illneſs. But it has pleaſed God to reſtore me to ſo tolerable a meaſure of health, that I am now able to think and write again. And with what pleaſure do I feel myſelf once more at eaſe!

How ungrateful are the generality of mankind while they enjoy this bleſſing! and how ſeldom (when they are well) do they reflect on the inconvenience and faintneſs, the wearineſs and pains, which attend a ſick bed? I never was ſenſible what I owed to God for my health, till I came to want it. While my blood flowed with an even uninterrupted courſe in its channels, and my arteries and ſinews were able to perform their ſeveral functions, I overlooked that mercy which had contrived them for thoſe operations. But as ſoon as they were obſtructed, I was ſenſible of their value. And while I ſickened at the ſight of my food, I envied the peaſant, whoſe health enabled him to earn his dinner with the ſweat of his brow; and while I was in torment in a ſtately apartment, and reſtleſs on a bed of down, how joyfully would I have exchanged conditions with the hind, who in an humble cottage was ſleeping on ſheaves of ſtraw! How readily would I have parted with all the vanity of airy titles, all the advantages of riches and grandeur, to purchaſe health! health, which gives reliſh to every enjoyment, and, like the rays of light, diffuſes beauty upon every object! When I was ill, the beauty of the creation was effaced to me: I found no longer harmony in the ſounds of muſic, nor joy while the ſun poured his meridian glory; but turned my eyes from the intolerable luſtre, and wiſhed for the ſhades of night to veil his radiance. I had no pleaſure in ſeeing every thing round me flouriſh, while I withered and decayed. The birds that warbled near my window, ſeemed to ſing my funeral dirge; and every fly that buzzed in my chamber, ſounded like an alarm to judgment. When night came, I conſidered that probably I might never

never ſee day-light again till the morning of the reſurrection dawned upon the earth. And when I was drowſy, and inclining to ſleep, I imagined that I ſhould perhaps never wake, till I heard the voice of the Archangel, and the ſound of the laſt trumpet; nor lift up my head, till I ſaw the Son of man coming in the clouds with power and great glory. This near proſpect of death and judgment has put the world, and all its gaudy vanities, into a juſt light, and has convinced me of the falſity of human comforts. And I have reaſon to bleſs God, who has given me ſuch an opportunity of ſeeing things as they really are; and, by making me ſenſible of the ſmall conſolation that all the earth can afford in the time of illneſs, and at the hour of death, has directed my eyes and hopes to heaven, and made me know the value of thoſe hours which were too often waſted in guilt or folly. And believe me, *Leonora*, you will ſome time or other be ſenſible of this important truth. You are not more ſecure of years to come, than I appeared to be before this illneſs; and will find the ſplendor of a court, and all the flatteries of life, miſerable comforters upon a ſick bed. The pleaſures of this world will withdraw, and nothing remain with you but a ſenſe of your paſt conduct; and when you find yourſelf ready to quit the ſtage, you will have no concern about any thing but how you have acted your part.

I am ſtill very weak, though perfectly at eaſe; and I could be ſatisfied to remain ſo always, rather than hazard being again a ſlave to my paſſions and pleaſures. I am, with all imaginable ſincerity,

Your moſt faithful

DIANA.

LETTER X.

To LYSANDER.

I Told you, ſome time ſince, that my affairs would oblige me to paſs this ſummer at my eſtate in the weſt. I have been at it theſe ſix weeks. I brought no company hither but *Cleomedon*; who is ſo fond of his ſtudies, that

that I ſeldom ſee him, unleſs it be at meals; but then he is always ſprightly and chearful. And at other times I entertain myſelf either in the park or gardens; which afford me ſo much amuſement, that I never find the day too long.

I cannot forbear repeating to you an adventure which I met with a few days ago.——As I was riding over ſome of my farms, I came to the brow of an extreme high hill, from whence I had the proſpect of the moſt beautiful valley imaginable. It was full of woods, and watered with a large river: in ſome places it run very broad and ſtraight, in others it was more contracted, and flowed into a thouſand windings; ſometimes it was loſt among the woods, and roſe again with freſh beauty, as it run through the flowery lawns. I was ſo charmed with the ſight of this ſylvan ſcene, that I longed to be in it. But the difficulty was, how to get down the hill; for that ſide next the valley was almoſt perpendicular, and ſo rocky, and covered with wood, that it ſeemed unpaſſable. However, I diſmounted; and, leading my horſe, found a narrow winding, by which I made a ſhift to get to the bottom of the hill; at the foot of which was a delightful plain, here and there interſperſed with ſpreading oaks, beech and ſycamore trees. Here I had the pleaſure to obſerve the ſpring of the river that watered that beautiful valley. It guſhes out of the ſide of the rock; and, after falling from one cleft to another, a great height, runs even with the graſs through the plains and woods. I now got on horſeback again; and, following the courſe of the river about three or four furlongs, I came to a low houſe, behind which there was a plot of trees, and before a little court, which had no other fence than a laurel-hedge, breaſt-high. There was a little wicket, which ſtood open, and the neatneſs of the place tempted me to go in; which I did with the better aſſurance, becauſe I imagined, by the appearance and ſize of the houſe, that it was not inhabited by any perſons of diſtinction. I croſſed the court without ſeeing any body; and came into a hall, the neatneſs of which is not to be deſcribed. But I own I was ſurpriſed to ſee a harpſichord, upon which lay ſome muſic-books. I had the curioſity to look into them; and found ſome of them were opera-airs,

but

but the greater part hymns and anthems. There lay on the table two large folios of maps, and upon the ground I obſerved a pair of very fine globes. A furniture ſo different from what I expected, made me uncertain whether I ſhould follow my curioſity, which led me to go up a ſtair-caſe that was at one end of the hall; or go back without diſturbing the owners of the houſe, who I now began to believe were of a different rank from what I at firſt imagined; and yet it was inconceivable to me how any perſons of diſtinction ſhould be in ſuch a houſe. My curioſity at laſt prevailed, and I went up. But when I came near the top of the ſtairs, I heard a perſon reading with great juſtneſs, in a clear voice, which ſeemed to be a woman's. I ſtopped a little to liſten to her; and at laſt, turning on my right hand, I obſerved a door which ſtood half open, from whence I imagined the voice came. I drew near it without any noiſe, and could ſee a grave well-looking woman of about fifty, who was reading aloud to two very beautiful young ones, who were at work, embroidering flowers on white ſilk. They were dreſſed alike in white ſattin waiſtcoats, and brown lute-ſtring petticoats; and upon their heads fine laced caps, made like thoſe of the common peaſants. They had an air of innocence and modeſty greater than I ever ſaw. She who appeared the elder of the two, had dark hair, and the moſt blooming complexion imaginable. She was tall, and finely ſhaped; and might have paſſed for an inimitable beauty, had not the young creature who ſat by her ſhewed that it was poſſible even to ſurpaſs her. Her hair was almoſt flaxen, and her ſkin could ſcarce be equalled by any poetical ſimile; ſhe had large blue eyes, and her eye-brows and eye-laſhes were a dark brown; ſhe had a ſweetneſs in her countenance which would have diſarmed a tyger of its rage. I had conſidered them but a few moments, when ſhe who ſeemed the elder of the young women looked up, and ſeemed ſurpriſed at the ſight of a ſtranger. However, ſhe roſe with great civility, and ſaid, "Madam, here is a gentleman, who, "I believe, would ſpeak with you." I then was ſo confounded, that I neither knew how to retire, or make an excuſe for ſo unaccountable a viſit. But the eldeſt of the ladies aſked me to come in, with ſo benign and chear-

ful

ful an aſpect, that it gave me courage to own the occaſion of my intruſion, and aſk a thouſand pardons for it. To which ſhe anſwered, "That my curioſity was its "own puniſhment, ſince it had made me take ſo much "pains, to ſee what was ſo little worth it, as her re-"tirement." I had now time to view the room they were in. It was hung to the top of the chairs with fine *Indian* matting; above which, all round the room, were ſhelves filled with books: and, upon looking into them, I found them to be an admirable collection of hiſtory, divinity, and travels. There were a few books of the beſt philoſophy, and ſome plays. There were upon ſtands ſeveral baſons of flowers; and, in ſhort, every thing was ſo elegant and charming, that I began to fancy myſelf in an inchanted habitation, and could not forbear expreſſing my deſire to know how people of ſo extraordinary a genius came to live in ſo very retired a manner? Which the elderly lady perceiving, told me, that if I had patience, ſhe would give me a faithful account of it. She ſaid, her huſband was the heir of a Noble family; that his name was *Theanor*, by whom ſhe had two daughters, which were the young women I ſaw; that her huſband died when the eldeſt was betwixt eight and nine years old, and left great debts. In vain did ſhe apply to his rich relations; they would not aſſiſt her: ſo that ſhe found herſelf either obliged to alter her way of living, or leave his debts unpaid; which, though the laws did not force her to ſatisfy, ſhe thought herſelf bound to do, by all the rules of juſtice and honour. She therefore diſcharged all her ſervants, except two maids, and an ancient clergyman, whom ſhe kept to inſtruct her daughters. With this ſmall family ſhe retired to this houſe, where ſhe ſaid ſhe had lived upwards of fifteen years. She paid her huſband's debts in the firſt ſeven; but had found ſo much peace in that ſolitude, that ſhe was loth to quit it, and had the pleaſure to find both her daughters in the ſame mind. I could not forbear aſking how they amuſed themſelves in ſo abſolute a retreat, and in what manner they divided the day? In anſwer to which, ſhe told me, that indeed they ſeldom went abroad; and that when ſhe had given me an account of one day, ſhe told me their whole courſe of life for the laſt fifteen years.

"As

"As ſoon as we riſe, (ſaid ſhe), we meet in a little "chapel below ſtairs, where the clergyman I mention- "ed to you reads prayers to us, and we ſing a pſalm. "After this, we have our breakfaſt; and my daugh- "ters amuſe themſelves with their muſic or painting, "as they like beſt, while I am buſied with the affairs "of my family. About eleven o'clock we go into a "room, where we prepare medicines for the poor, who "cannot afford better help, and there have a preſs filled "with cloaths for them of all ſorts: and in the drawers "under, are Bibles, and other books of devotion; that "while we take care of their bodies, their ſouls may "not be entirely neglected. Here we ſpend our time "till we are ready to dreſs for dinner. After dinner, "my daughters play on the harpſichord, and ſing; or "ſometimes we only converſe till we have a mind to "come up hither, where one of us conſtantly reads "while the others work. In the evening, we walk "till ſupper; after which, we call our little family, "and end the day as we begun it, in praiſing God, "and imploring his protection."

I told her, "I was no longer ſurpriſed that they liked "their way of living, ſince it appeared to me to be "ſuch as muſt entirely ſecure them from all kinds of "diſcontent."

They none of them anſwered to this; and, upon looking up, I ſaw the face of the eldeſt daughter covered with tears. I expreſſed my concern at this ſudden alteration, and begged to know the occaſion of it. "Alas! "(ſaid her mother), this unhappy girl is more to be pi- "tied than you imagine; and it is only on her account "that I feel ſorrow. About five years ago ſhe fell de- "ſperately in love with a young man, who was equally "ſo with her. But the misfortune was, that he was "not only much below her in his fortune, but of a family "which are notorious for their wickedneſs; though he "is not ſo himſelf; for his mother, who was perfectly "virtuous, had inſtilled into him all the principles of "piety and morality. They had long had a mutual "tenderneſs before I perceived it; but when I did, and "found how much *Roſella*'s heart was fixed, it afflicted "me ſo that I fell into a deep melancholy, which ended

" in a dangerous ſickneſs, and I was given over by my " phyſicians. I then told *Roſella* the cauſe of my ill- " neſs, and adviſed her againſt a marriage, the appre- " henſions of which had, in all probability, coſt me my " life. She fell on her knees by my bed-ſide, and, " bathing my hand with her tears, begged I would en- " deavour to recover; for if ſome body was to be the " victim of her unhappy paſſion, ſhe was reſolved it " ſhould be herſelf, ſince death would be leſs terrible " to her than offending me. I rejoiced, and was ſur- " priſed at her compliance, and hoped her affections " had not been ſo firmly rooted as I ſince found. When " I began to recover, ſhe begged leave to write to *Al-* " *phonſo*, (for that was the name of her lover), and " give him an account of the promiſe ſhe had made, " and the reaſons which forced her to it. He received " the news with inexpreſſible grief, and the next day " left his father's houſe; to which he has never yet re- " turned, nor has any body heard of him. I have " been ſo much touched with my daughter's ſufferings, " and the patience with which ſhe endured them, with- " out ever upbraiding me as the cauſe of them, that I " now wiſh as ardently as ſhe does, to ſee him return; " that I may have the pleaſure of rewarding her filial " piety, by giving her hand where ſhe long ago placed " her heart." She could not end this relation without tears, in which her daughters accompanied her.

I own I was moved with compaſſion at the ſtory of *Roſella*; and cannot take my thoughts from the charming retirement, or forget the beauty of *Meliſſa*, which was the name of the younger daughter.

I ſtaid till it was dark, and then took my leave, extremely delighted with ſo uncommon an adventure. Adieu.

BELLAMOUR.

See the continuation of her ſtory in Letter 12. Part 2.

LET-

LETTERS

Moral and Entertaining.

PART II.

LETTER I.

To Lady SOPHIA, *from a young woman of quality, relating the occaſion of her leaving her father's houſe.*

MADAM,

WHERE-EVER I am, it will be a pleaſure to you, I am perſuaded, to know I have found a retreat entirely to my own ſatisfaction. The occaſion of my flight and concealment, you are partly acquainted with. I found my father inflexible in his reſolution of marrying me to a foreigner of great diſtinction, one of his own principles, a bigotted Papiſt. My mother, you know, was a ſtrict Proteſtant; and, by her marriage-articles, had ſecured her own liberty, and that of educating her daughters in the ſame profeſſion. I was their only child, carefully inſtructed in thoſe ſacred truths, which, by the aſſiſtance of Heaven, I will never renounce, but rather give up my title to all the dazzling advantages the world can tempt me with. It is for this I am a voluntary exile from my father's houſe; who, after my mother's death, intrenched on my religious liberty, reſtrained me from the public worſhip, and forbid me reading my Bible. Theſe ſeverities, with the *French* match he was treating for me, put me on the deſperate adventure of privately quitting his family, and ſecuring my freedom in ſome humble diſguiſe. No perſon on earth was privy to my deſign, but a near relation of my mother's, a perſon of ſtrict honour and piety; who encouraged me to ſacrifice every thing, rather than re-

nounce my faith, or break my peace with Heaven and my own conſcience.

I got the habit of a country-girl; and, with this gentleman's aſſiſtance, was carried into one of the moſt fertile counties in *England*, till we came near a large farm-houſe, of which he had ſome knowledge, and there he left me to make my own fortune. I went on with cautious ſteps, till I came to the entrance of a ſquare court, ſurrounded with a hedge of hawthorn in its full bloom. Here I met the miſtreſs of the family. She appeared young, and, in a clean modeſt dreſs, was perfectly agreeable. There was ſomething in her aſpect ſo gentle and beneficent, that I could not help being intereſted in her welfare, from the firſt moment I ſaw her.

She was then dealing out the remains of a plentiful table to a company of indigent people; who with lifted hands and grateful hearts implored Heaven to reward her, in a thouſand bleſſings. A very pretty boy and girl, with ſparkling eyes, and roſy cheeks, ſtood hanging on her apron; who, to mimic their mother, gave away all the little treaſure they had in their pockets to the beggars children; and then fell a-crying, becauſe ſhe would not ſuffer them to pull off their own ſhoes and ſtockings, to give to ſome that were bare-footed.

As ſoon as ſhe had diſmiſſed her dependents, I offered my ſervice, and told her the diſtreſſes to which I muſt be expoſed, if ſhe refuſed me. She perceived my concern was unaffected; and ſeeing me young, with the bloom of health in my looks, (without any of that impertinent caution I expected), ſhe agreed to receive me into her ſervice. She then happened to want a ſervant, rather to ſhare with her in the management of a large family, than to be employed in any domeſtic drudgery. I know not why, but ſhe ſeemed pleaſed with me; and I, with equal content, entered my new ſtation, without any melancholy reviews of my paſt grandeur, the dignity of my birth, or the delicacy of my education. The glorious motive for which I had reſigned the ſplendid vanities of life, gave an unſpeakable alacrity to my mind, and filled it with that ineffable peace that ſprings from conſcious virtue.

Be theſe celeſtial conſolations mine,
And I the world, with all its pomp, reſign.

I did not ſee my new maſter till the evening; when he came home, with a train, not of beaus and powdered footmen, but of induſtrious honeſt labourers; ſome of his own houſhold, and others hired by the day, whom he punctually paid at the cloſe of it, repeating that rule of the ſacred ſcripture, *Thou ſhalt not ſleep with the wages of an hireling.* He is a very grave man, twice the age of his wife; a perſon of great prudence, and unblemiſhed honeſty; very hoſpitable to ſtrangers, as gentle and compaſſionate to his ſervants: country-buſineſs is his great delight, in the management of which Heaven has bleſſed him with uninterrupted proſperity, and vaſt increaſe.

The farm-houſe is indeed ſomewhat antique, but ſpacious and pleaſant. A more agreeable ſituation cannot be imagined, nor a greater variety of ſylvan ſcenes deſcribed in poetry, unleſs Mr *Thomſon*'s *Spring and Summer Seaſons* could riſe in one inchanting proſpect. The wide landſkip round is all my maſter's propriety; his ſnowy flocks are ranging on the hills, his graſing herds lowing through the plains: the mountains are crowned with the great Creator's bounty, and the vallies made vocal with his praiſes.

Theſe ſcenes of innocence and plenty bring back the patriarchal ages to my view, and give me a ſort of pious pleaſure. Methinks I ſee the plains of *Mamre*, covered with the wealthy *Hebrews* flocks and herds; or, ſhifting the ſcene for the fruitful fields of *Haran*, the beauteous *Rachel* following her fleecy charge, ſeems to come in view. *Boaz* and his reapers appeared to my fancy, in the jovial month of harveſt. In that chearful ſeaſon, here was no wild riot, no rude intemperance; nothing but harmleſs merriment appeared among any of my maſter's domeſtics. As ſoon as they enter his ſervice, he gives them a *Bible*, and *The practice of piety*; with ſtrict orders, that they appear conſtantly on the *Lord's day* at the public worſhip, unleſs they have ſuch an excuſe as they dare carry to the laſt tribunal.

It will not be incredible to one of your piety, that I

can make myſelf eaſy, in a way of life ſo different from the gaieties of a court, to which I have been inured. I am not only eaſy, but really happy. My miſtreſs, who has a ſweetneſs of temper not to be equalled, is fond of me; and leaves me, not to be idle, but, which is much better, to chuſe my own employment. You know my ſtature is above the common height: and ſince I came here, I am rather grown taller, and ſomewhat more plump; ſo that a little buſineſs does me no manner of harm.

I have entirely put off the fine lady, and all my court-airs. I have almoſt forgot I am an Earl's daughter; and ſhould ſtart at the ſound of *Lady Frances*. Inſtead of that, I am plain *Roſalinda*, without any other appellation, but what the gentle ſwains now and then give me, of a handſome laſs, or a proper damſel; with which I am infinitely better pleaſed, than when I was an angel, or a goddeſs, and impiouſly addreſſed in the ſtrains of adoration. If ever I return to the modiſh world, I muſt learn to dance again, having perfectly forgot to make my honours. I have made but one curtſey ſince I came here, and that was to a ſquire; who, becauſe it was ſomething low, and not finiſhed in the twinkling of an eye, catched me by the hand, verily believing I was ſinking to the ground in a fainting-fit. I am not turned Quaker; but I have laid aſide all ceremony, and call every body in the village by their Chriſtian names; except my maſter and miſtreſs, and the parſon of the pariſh; whom I cannot paſs by without telling you, he is a man of exemplary piety, of univerſal charity, and a great bleſſing to this place.

My ſplendid diſtinction of being the head-ſervant, as it gives me a pretence to keep my diſtance, and to be as reſerved as I think fit; ſo it frees me from any drudgery but what is my own choice; the worſt of which is, rubbing a long oaken table, that graces the hall, and is kept as bright as a looking-glaſs. My *Saturday*'s work, is dreſſing four or five ſpacious chimnies with pionies, holly-oaks, or branches of bays. Some part of my time (and that the moſt delightful) is ſpent in rambling the fields with my maſter's children, the pretty boy and girl I mentioned. While they are following their little ſports, I give up my thoughts to ſome innocent reverie,

or

or pious meditation. To this the view of the fair creation invites me. Here the preſent Deity ſeems to challenge a natural homage, while he chears me in the glory of the ſun, refreſhes me in the fragrant breeze, is beauty in the flowers of the field, and harmony in the nightingale's voice. With a ſort of ecſtaſy, I repeated *Milton*'s morning-hymn, to which the *Italian* tranſlation gives new life and muſic.

Glorioſe opre tue tutte ſon queſte
Padre del bene omnipotente; E' tuo
Queſto compoſto univerſal, cotanto
A mervigla bello; or qua'l ſarui
Oggetto di ſtupor, tu ſteſſo
*Ineffabil———**.

But I am not always in the ſublime: I ſometimes deſcend to gather cowſlips and daiſies, or purſue ſome gaudy butterfly, with my pretty companions; or pleaſe myſelf with dreſſing up their fine flaxen hair with tufts of flowers.

Theſe you will think are very guiltleſs amuſements; and if I ſhould tell you I have an amour, altogether as guiltleſs, dear Lady *Sophia*, would you not believe me! I ſuppoſe you will aſk me, if my charms have captivated the lord of the manor, or a Juſtice of the *quorum*, or the High-Sheriff of the county. Alas! my ambition ſleeps: I ſhould not aim at theſe glorious conqueſts, not even in my beſt apparel; and, in that, I muſt tell you, I am as fine as any ſhepherdeſs in an *Opera*. But if you was to ſee the gentle youth that I have the vanity to think ſighs for me, you would believe him ſome poetical form: he is ſo elegant, ſo beautiful, that when he appears, the ſcene is all *Arcadia*; and (except a certain perſon with a ſtar and garter) he is the handſomeſt youth that ever your eyes beheld. Nor will you wonder, when I tell you, his deſcent is from a younger branch of the *S*———

* Theſe are thy glorious works, Parent of good!
Almighty! thine this univerſal frame,
Thus wondrous fair; thyſelf how wondrous then!
Unſpeakable,———
Milton's Paradiſe loſt, Book v. l. 153.

family,

family, a race remarkable for heroes and beauties. By the extravagance of his anceſtors, the eſtate has been long ſunk to about two or three hundred a-year. This youth was left from his infancy to the care of a grandmother, and bred as well as her narrow fortune would allow: but it is eaſy to perceive, he owes nothing but to Nature, which has given him every advantage, without the vices of a polite education. He is about my own age, hardly turned of nineteen. When I firſt ſaw him, he was ſitting under a ſhady beech, with an *Engliſh Paſtor Fido* in his hand; he appeared like another *Adonis*, in the ſofteſt bloom of life. I cannot deſcribe him better than in the following verſes, writ by Lady *B*———; on another ſubject.

His faultleſs ſhape appear'd with ev'ry grace;
While beauty ſat triumphant in his face:
His hair, the paleſt brown, in ringlets flow'd,
And charms beyond the reach of art beſtow'd:
His forehead white as ſnow, his radiant eyes
The bright celeſtial blue that paints the ſkies:
A guiltleſs bluſh his blooming cheeks diſcloſe,
The native tincture of an op'ning roſe:
His aſpect open, artleſs, and ſerene,
Reveal'd the ſpotleſs mind that dwelt within,

In this perfection of youthful charms, he has all that modeſty that riſes from a delicacy of thought, and a conſtant fear of offending. I am ſo demure and reſerved, that he has not the leaſt ſuſpicion of my partiality for him; nor dares diſcover his own for me, though he believes his ſtation ſo ſuperior to mine. He looks and ſighs, but is as ſilent as your great-grandfather's buſto that ſtands on his monument. I am indeed a very great prude, and never gave him an opportunity to ſpeak on this ſubject; but if I ſhould, the attempt would infallibly ſuffocate him. He lately brought me a baſket of flowers from a little neat garden of his grandmother's; but he ſtood ſo long in ſuſpenſe, with the baſket in his hands, that I feared the fragrant bloſſoms would have been withered before he could come to a reſolution to let me have them.

He

He would certainly have preſented them to the Queen with more aſſurance, and a better grace, had he been received with thoſe propitious ſmiles, which never fail to encourage modeſt virtue, and ſcatter every human care.

ROSALINDA.

LETTER II.

To Lady SOPHIA, *from the ſame.*

NOT bubbling fountains to the thirſty ſwain, were ever more welcome, dear Lady *Sophia*, than your letter to me. Nothing can be more ſolemn than the profeſſion of your friendſhip, nor more agreeable than your raillery on my gallant. He may be, as you imagine, one of Count *Gabalis*'s *Sylphs*, or ſome gentle ſpirit of the vale, propitious to virtuous lovers; or of the number of the ſylvan *genii*, with whom he ſeems to converſe more than with any thing of human race. I have ſeldom ſeen him, but either walking in ſome verdant incloſure, under a hedge-row of ſhady trees; or ſitting with a flute in his hand, by ſome purling rivulet, mimicking the nightingale's penſive note; while the melting muſic glides along the ſtream, and echoes through the flowery dale. In one of my rambles with my little miſtreſs, I followed the courſe of a pretty caſcade, which fell from an eaſy deſcent, and led me to a natural bower of trees, whoſe branches mingling at the top, formed a lofty arch, and excluded the noon-day's ſultry beams. I entered the ſilent retreat, with as much veneration as if it had been ſacred to ſome inviſible power. But how great was my ſurpriſe, when I ſaw the lovely youth reclined on a moſſy bank, loſt in downy ſleep! The verdant couch was canopied over with ivy, twining with honyſuckles.

Never did any thing human appear ſo beautiful! A bluſh, like the roſy morning, painted his face, while ſmiles of peace and conſcious innocence ſeemed to bleſs the golden ſlumber. I gazed for a few moments with the ſame guiltleſs delight as an ethereal being would inſpire, and then ſoftly withdrew.

If he is, as you flatter me, ſome bright inhabitant of the air, the purity of my paſſion is very agreeable to a lover

lover of that kind. It is a harmleſs lambent flame, that plays about my heart, and gives me no manner of uneaſineſs; it is ſuch a ſanctity of affection, as neither interrupts nor profanes my devotion; it has ſomething more than the tenderneſs of friendſhip, and leſs than the warmth and violence of paſſion; and ſeems, like the dictates of guiltleſs nature, to ſoften the fatigues of my new ſtation.

Theſe refinements, Lady *Sophia*, will, I fear, be a little incredible to you, who are dazzled with the luſtre of a Duke's coronet, and have placed your affections on mortal charms.

I am come now to the ſerious part of your letter. I know that religion is the governing principle of your actions; which makes me the more ſurpriſed that you ſhould perſuade me to put myſelf on the hazard of a ſecond trial. Are you ſure, that neither the flattery nor threatenings of my father will prevail with me to renounce the reformed religion, and perjure myſelf, by giving my vows to a man my ſoul deteſts? Do you think the ſparks of vanity and ambition extinguiſhed in my breaſt? that greatneſs and pleaſure have no charms? or that the tender affection I have for my father will ever be effaced? Oh! Lady *Sophia*, if you knew the anguiſh it coſt me, to break through theſe ſoft, theſe powerful engagements, you would not perſuade me to quit this peaceful retreat, and put the event on another trial.

Your care for me ſeems confined to this world, whatever becomes of me in the next. Could you meet me again ſhining in the drawing-room, or ſparkling in the ring, it would perhaps content you; though I never glittered among the ſtars, nor was admitted into the celeſtial aſſemblies. If I loſt the muſic of the ſpheres, I ſuppoſe your heart would be at reſt, could I once more hear the tranſporting ſound of —— a *Title*, and be reſtored to my loſt dignity. And yet the poſſeſſion of theſe privileges never put me in an ecſtaſy; nor can I help fancying, *Roſalinda* has as muſical a ſound as *Lady Frances*. I never found a ſpell in thoſe Right Honourable ſyllables for an aching head or an heavy heart. My Ladyſhip finds as great ſatisfaction in ranking a ſet of

Delft

Delft diſhes on a free-ſtone chimney-piece, as ever I had in diſpoſing my fine china on an *Indian* cabinet.

A clean cambric cap, and an holland gown wrought with natural flowers, is the top of my finery; in which I like myſelf as well, and think I look as handſome, as when I was dreſſed in brocades and jewels for a birth-night. Indeed, that happy occaſion always gave an alacrity to my thoughts, and carried me through the glorious toil with pleaſure. But I have a mind as eaſy and innocent now, as when burthened with thoſe coſtly ornaments: a red croſs-knot, a glaſs necklace, and flowers in my boſom, are the only uſeleſs parts of my dreſs; which is either the gift of Nature, or honeſtly paid for; in which I am a thouſand times more happy, than I ſhould be in borrowed finery, at the expence of ſome induſtrious trader's ruin, and that of his whole family.

You find, Lady *Sophia*, I am very well at eaſe, and enjoy a perfect tranquillity, in this humble ſtation. It was a principle truly rational and divine, that induced me to give up all the ſplendid diſtinctions of my birth, the eaſe and delicacy to which I had been accuſtomed, rather than baſely deny thoſe ſacred truths, to which my ſoul religiouſly aſſented, and whoſe divine articles ſome of my glorious anceſtors have ſigned with their blood.

Inſtead of looking back with regret on my paſt grandeur, the reſignation gives me a taſte of celeſtial joy; the ſongs of angels could not ſooth me with ſofter harmony, than what reſults from the ſecret approbation of my own reaſon: and while all within is peaceful and ſerene, whether I am in a palace or cottage, my happineſs is ſecure.

ROSALINDA.

LETTER III.

To Lady SOPHIA, *from the ſame.*

YOur advice, dear Lady *Sophia*, is, without queſtion, well meant; but I dare not follow it. My father is ſo far from relenting, that I have had intelligence ſince I came here, that he has ſworn by all that is holy, unleſs I will marry Count *Altamont*, and embrace the

Romiſh

Romiſh religion, he will ſettle his whole eſtate on ſome monaſtery at his deceaſe.

This was what I expected; and I am ſure you will not perſuade me to renounce heaven, and damn myſelf, for the ſordid purchaſe of eighty thouſand pounds; nor would you conſiderately adviſe me, to hazard a celeſtial advancement for a gilded coronet, or prefer the flattery of miſtaken mortals to the approbation of angels. They have been witneſſes of my pious vows; and ſhould I violate my faith, and turn apoſtate to heaven, thoſe miniſters of light would bring in their awful evidence, and ſtand my accuſers at the laſt dreadful tribunal. And can you in earneſt think it the effect of wiſdom and juſt reflexion, to dare the menaces of divine juſtice, rather than incur my father's unmerited reſentment? Such I muſt term it, having found his affections entirely alienated before I left him. There is full evidence he was pleaſed with my flight, and takes no thought of making any inquiry about it.

But Heaven can witneſs with what reluctance I have torn myſelf from the ſight of this unnatural parent; what anguiſh, what pangs of affection it coſt me! This was the moſt difficult part of my conqueſt. The delicacy and ſoftneſs to which I had been inured, the eclat of birth and quality, reputation, and eſteem of my friends, I reſigned with ſome degree of fortitude. But here Nature with ſpecious arguments oppoſed, and had triumphed in my perdition, unaſſiſted by the ſacred oracles. To them I applied in this perplexity; and received aid from the heavenly illumination. Here I found it by the eternal Truth determined,——*He that loves father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me.*——I worſhipped, and obeyed the celeſtial dictates.

This was no raſh inconſiderate action, but the effect of reaſon and deſign. After having counted the coſt, I found the odds to be infinite; the damage was momentary, the recompence unlimited and immenſe.

'Tis finiſh'd now, the great deciding part;
The world's ſubdu'd, and Heav'n has all my heart.
Earth's gaudy ſhews, and pomp of courts, adieu!
For ever now I turn my eyes from you.

What

What can the world, what can the artifice of hell propoſe, to tempt me to relinquiſh my choice! What could they lay in the balance againſt the ſovereign good! What could they offer as an equivalent to the favour of the infinite Divinity, whoſe ſmiles enlighten the realms of joy, and fill the celeſtial inhabitants with unutterable ecſtaſy! ——Aſk thoſe happy ſpirits who know what the light of his countenance imports, what ſhould buy one moment's interval of their bliſs.—Aſk ſome radiant cherub, amidſt his flaming raptures, at what price he values his enjoyment.—And when they have named the purchaſe, earth and hell may try to balance my glorious expectations.

Pleaſure would court in vain, and beauty ſmile,
Glory in vain my wiſhes would beguile;
The perſecutor's rage I would not fear!
Let Death in ev'ry horrid form appear,
And with his keeneſt darts my breaſt aſſail!
When breath, and ev'ry vital ſpring, ſhall fail,
This ſacred flame on brighter wings ſhall riſe,
And unextinguiſh'd reach its native ſkies.

A thouſand times bleſſed be that propitious Power, who from the plenitude of bliſs, and the higheſt exaltation of glory, deſcended to low mortality; and, by his own great example and ſufferings, animated my breaſt with this divine fortitude, and marked a way to victory and immortal honour. How ſincerely I have followed the heavenly illumination, my witneſs is within, and my record on high.

My father, I know, is inexorable, and has cut me off from his paternal care, and all the privileges of my birth; but while I look forward to the bright recompence prepared for ſuffering virtue, this loſs ſits lightly on my ſoul.

But friendſhip with a ſtronger force detains me. Here my ſoul is in ſuſpenſe.——Dear Lady *Sophia*, how ſhall I ſpeak my laſt adieu? I feel the pangs of ſeparation, an anguiſh beyond all the emphaſis of human learning to utter.——Adieu! we muſt meet no more, till the courſe of nature is diſſolved, and the ſun has meaſured his laſt radiant circle round the ſkies.

ROSALINDA.

See the ſequel of her ſtory in Letter 1. Part 3.

LETTER IV.

To LAURINDA.

JOin with me, dear *Laurinda*, in thanking Heaven, that I am once more returned to the manſion-ſeat of my forefathers; for had I ſtaid much longer in *London*, I had certainly left my wits there. Would you believe that my ſerious retired temper could find charms in a multitude, or my heart be held captive in a ſplendid circle of a blue garter! that I, who have been uſed to view the ſtars which glittered over my head in a clear night, ſhould be dazzled with the luſtre of an embroidered one! and yet all this has befallen me. I was the other day making a viſit to *Cleomira*, when the Duke of ———'s chariot, with three laced footmen behind it, ſtopped at the door. I was at the window, and ſaw him alight. He is really a handſome man; but his charms were extremely increaſed by the pomp which ſurrounded him; the reſpectful awe with which his attendants approached him, heightened the majeſty of his appearance. His legs were formed into the exacteſt ſymmetry by the magnificent clocks of his ſtockings. The deference which was paid him at his firſt coming into the room, taught me to look upon him as ſomething above the race of mortals which I had been uſed to converſe with. When I had time to conſider his face, I found it received a much greater addition from a fair wig loaded with powder, than it could have done from artleſs ringlets of the moſt lovely hair. After he had ſat a little, he aſked *Cleomira* to go with him to his houſe, to ſee a fine ſet of hangings which were juſt come over from the *Gobelins*. She excuſed herſelf, as being obliged to ſtay and entertain me: but he aſked me to be of the party: and as ſoon as *Cleomira*'s coach was ready, we all went together. But if I was charmed with the ſparkling chariot and embroidered coat, I was inchanted with the houſe. The lofty roofs, the painted ſtair-caſe, the gilded wainſcot, ſtruck me with a pleaſure I had never felt. However, it was an unquiet joy, and I longed to be at home; for I thought myſelf in a dangerous ſituation. As ſoon as *Cleomira* had ſet me down at my lodgings, I immediately

ly ſet about packing up my things; and the very next morning, in the height of my ecſtaſy, left *London* and all its pomp behind me. But how are either my eyes or every object altered ſince I have been abſent! The houſe uſed to appear a handſome ancient building, but now I find it only a *Gothic* heap of ſtone; the cielings are ſo low, that I am afraid of knocking my brains out; and the entry ſo narrow, that if I ſhould meet any body, I ſhould certainly run back again, for fear of being ſqueezed againſt the wall in endeavouring to paſs. I want to pull down the venerable pictures of my anceſtors, becauſe they were not painted in *Italy*. The bow-windows terrify me, and muſt be changed into *Venetian* ones; for there is no bearing the light which ſtrikes through ſo unfaſhionable a piece of architecture. The roſy daughters of the neighbouring 'ſquires are become in my eyes aukward figures; and there is ſomething ſo ungenteel and coarſe in ſuch an exuberance of health, that I cannot bear to look at them. The young men of the village appear downright bumpkins; and I cannot perceive any beauty in the chearful bloom of their countenances, or juſt proportion of their ſhape through the melancholy diſguiſe of unpowdered locks, and plain broad-cloth apparel. If they talk to me, I am amazed how a man has the aſſurance to open his mouth any where, who has not a right to ſpeak in the houſe of Peers, and can never comprehend how any thing worth communicating can enter into a head which was never circled with a coronet. Sentences which are uttered by plain *Cleon*, have no force; though perhaps the ſame words would have all the charms of eloquence, if pronounced by an Earl.

You ſee I am not very happy at preſent in the ſociety of my old acquaintance; but I hope this delicacy will ſoon wear off, or I ſhall not be able to behave myſelf patiently among a ſet of people, with whom I have formerly ſpent many happy hours.

Adieu, my dear *Laurinda*. My politeneſs will not leſſen, but increaſe the value I ſet upon your friendſhip; ſince I am ſure the *beau-monde* would approve me for being unalterably

Your's, &c. LAVINIA.

LETTER V.

The ſequel of the ſtory of SYLVIA, *in the third letter of the firſt part of* Letters Moral and Entertaining, *To* BELINDA.

MADAM,

YOur ſuſpicions are too juſt, of the occaſion of my late ſickneſs. I have waited with great impatience for the ſatisfaction of diſcloſing the ſecrets of my ſoul to you; but my ſtrength would not ſooner permit me to give you this proof of my obedience to your commands, and the confidence I have in your fidelity.

Why was I formed with theſe ſoft inclinations, this fatal propenſity to love! How happy are you, who, amidſt the gayeſt advantages of youth and fortune, can act with ſuch a graceful regularity, and govern your paſſions with an abſolute command, free from thoſe tender emotions which interrupt the felicity of my life!

I ſpent the laſt winter in the country with my father, whoſe pious inſtructions, confirmed by his own practice, directed me to a refined and immortal happineſs: nor could any invitations from the *Comteſſe de R*———, nor all my brother's importunity, prevail with me to quit a retirement where I found ſo much peace, and unmoleſted tranquillity. My criminal paſſion for *Monſieur le Comte* ——— ſeemed perfectly extinguiſhed, and gave place to a nobler attachment; Heaven had all my vows, thither with a divine ambition my ſoul aſpired. This ſacred ardour, like incenſe, mingled with the morning-fragrance, and cheared the evening-ſhades; the whiſpering brooks and ſylvan retreats witneſſed to the heavenly flame; where, in language like this, I often addreſſed the inviſible, but preſent Divinity.

" O thou, whom unſeen I love! tell me by what
" gentle influence thou doſt attract my deſires. Theſe
" eyes have never ſeen thy lovely face, no accent of thy
" voice has reached my ear; and yet thou art more in-
" timate to my ſoul than any of the objects of ſenſe.
" To thee I tell my inmoſt care, and open every grief;
" while ſome heavenly gale diſpels the gloom, and
" breathes eternal peace and fragrance on my ſoul.

" *Not*

" *Not bleſs'd* Arabia, *when her ſpices flow,*
" *And load the weſtern breezes with their ſpoils,*
" *Is half ſo ſweet; nor half ſo ſweet the breath*
" *Of op'ning roſes, when the dewy morn*
" *Renews the garden's pride, while the glad ſun*
" *Calls out the blooming life of ev'ry flow'r.*

" My wiſhes fly beyond the bounds of this low cre-
" ation, and terminate in thee, the ſpring of freſh and
" ever-blooming joys. 'Tis thee, abſtractly thee,
" oh uncreated Beauty, that I love! not as a miſer
" loves his wealth, or the ambitious his grandeur; not
" as the libertine loves his pleaſure, or the generous
" man his friend: theſe are flat ſimilitudes, and would
" profane the ſacred ardour; but thou canſt read the
" unutterable thought, and explain the ſecret meaning
" of my ſoul. Search its inmoſt receſſes; and if thou
" findeſt any competitor there, remove the darling va-
" nity, and blot every name but thine from my heart."

In this elevation, my dear *Belinda*, would you not think me ſecure from mortal charms? Could one of your equal temper conceive there was ſuch an eaſy tranſition from devotion to love,—mere earthly love! Would the moſt uncharitable perſon in the world have ſaid, that from this ſublime ſituation I ſhould in a few moments quit the ſkies, and bid the angels farewel!

But ſuch was the event. My brother coming haſtily to me into the garden, where I was walking, told me the *Comte de R*——— intended him the honour of a viſit, and would be with us the next morning. He left me immediately, without obſerving the conſternation I was in, or giving himſelf any trouble about my panic or vapours.

I knew not what or where I was. The celeſtial ſcenes that had juſt before engaged my contemplation, vaniſhed; the heavens were no more; paradiſe, with all its glories, diſappeared like a Fairy viſion; my flight was finiſhed, and I ſunk to low mortality again. I aſked myſelf, if I were aſleep or awake, in my right ſenſes, or out of my wits? whether I really knew my own name, and was indeed the happy perſon, that, a few minutes before,

had looked with indifference or contempt on all the gay allurements of the world? In this confuſion I ſtood as if I had been fixed to the place by a ſpell, till my father ſent for me to conſult about ſome family-affairs, as he had always done ſince my mother's death.

The *Comte*'s viſit was wholly intended to my brother. They were engaged in the moſt perfect friendſhip, founded on reſembling virtues, and an equal abhorrence of every kind of vice. It was a full year ſince I had ſeen him: it is probable he never ſuſpected my folly, nor once imagined the cauſe of my retirement; this yielded me ſome ſatisfaction, and gave me hopes I ſhould conceal my guilty paſſion.

But I was undeceived the moment the lovely youth arrived. An innate grandeur gave a dignity to his mien; the ſplendor of virtue brightened his aſpect; there was ſomething in his whole behaviour ſo benign and engaging, that I found it impoſſible to reſiſt the ſoft inſinuation; the pleaſing delirium entirely poſſeſſed me, and I betrayed myſelf by a thouſand inadvertencies. However, I had ſome pauſes of diſcretion, and ſtarted with horror at my own injuſtice; my ſoul was full of anxiety, to think how I ſhould bear this inward ſtruggle for the ſeven or eight days which the *Comte* intended to ſtay, the firſt of which was not yet paſt.

The ſummer was now in its pride; and as ſoon as the evening made walking pleaſant, my brother conducted his agreeable gueſt through a variety of charming walks to an artificial grotto. The top was round and lofty, painted with a beautiful ſky, hung with a great number of little cryſtal ſconces formed like ſtars; in the midſt there was placed one larger than the reſt, ſhaped like a creſcent. The ſides of this fine cavity were rock-work, adorned with branches of coral, mother of pearl, and a great variety of counterfeit gems, ſparkling among the well-imitated clefts of marble. It was paved in flowers with a kind of moſaic work; the ſeats were ſhaped like little banks, covered with green velvet inſtead of moſs. In this inchanting retreat a ſupper was ordered, attended with an exquiſite concert of voices and inſtruments; *Milton*'s morning-hymn was ſung, and ſeveral of the ſolemneſt *Italian* compoſures. The whole performance

performance was noble and pathetic, while the gardens and groves around returned a thouſand ſoft melodious echoes.

This grave muſic was exactly ſuited to the charming ſtranger's genius; and yet, through the whole evening, never did any thing appear ſo abſtract, ſo liſtleſs, and ſo inattentive. As ſoon as the entertainment was over, and the company withdrawn, (except my brother), he begged to be excuſed from ſtaying a week, as he deſigned, and that he might be ſuffered to return the next morning; which, after ſome apologies on both ſides, was agreed.

I was ſo ill in the morning, that it prevented my ſeeing the *Comte:* who could not but diſcover the unhappy conqueſt he had made, and certainly left us ſo ſuddenly, to free me from ſuch a criminal perplexity, or to ſtifle the ſame kindling guilt in his own breaſt. This laſt was what my brother believed, and thought it as glorious an inſtance of virtue and friendſhip, as it was poſſible for a man in the warmth of youthful paſſion to give.

Whatever it was, my diſorder increaſed, till it came to a dangerous fever. Death was now in view; my tender cares and fancied diſtreſſes were loſt in a more important concern; the little amuſements of the world vaniſhed like dreams; a hovering miſt veiled the face of Nature, and darkened all its beauty; nor could any ſound of joy chear the ſullen hours. I was on the confines of the grave, entering the habitations of the dead. This proſpect had a ſolemnity in it, beyond whatever I conceived in the hours of health.

Think, vain fond heart, when on the ſteep
Of that tremendous awful deep,
Eternity, in ſad ſuſpence I ſtood,
How all my trifling hopes and fears,
My ſenſeleſs joys and idle tears,
Vaniſh'd at proſpect of the frightful flood!

I ſtood ſhivering on the brink, looking forward with a dreadful curioſity: all before me was hid in darkneſs, and impenetrable ſecrecy: the great experiment was untried, the region of ſpirits ſtrange and unknown: it was yet a perhaps, an uncertainty, on which my hopes depended;

depended: the grand queſtion, whether I ſhould be happy or miſerable for ever? was yet undecided: I was ſtartled at a mere poſſibility of being ſhut out of the ſtarry courts, and excluded from the illuſtrious aſſembly of happy immortals.

Indeed I had no intervals of deſpair; my hopes and fears were equally balanced. No allowed or unrepented crime preſſed my ſoul. Virtue had been my early, my deliberate choice, the ſuperior deſign and governing ſpring of all my conduct. I hope I had made ſome preparation for death, and had often meditated on the ſerious ſubject; but it was in the hours of perfect health and vivacity. I had never before groned on a ſick-bed; theſe ſolemnities were new, and infinitely more awful than I had ever conceived.

Death threatened me now at a diſadvantage, in the criſis of folly. An unuſual diſorder of mind, ſickneſs and pain, gave every thing a gloomy aſpect, and heightened even natural frailties into the blackeſt guilt; while the griſly monarch ſtood inſulting before me, and drew his ſable curtains round my bed. But a ſuperior power reſcued me from his ravenous jaws, and bid me live, to ſpeak my great Deliverer's praiſe.

This ſickneſs has given me another ſet of thoughts. My apprehenſions of dying are as different from what they were before, as the evidence of waking certainties are from the airy illuſions of a dream. My notions were once very gay and romantic; I fancied I ſhould take my final leave of the world with an exceeding good grace, and bid adieu very ſedately to all the vanities beneath the ſun, Till it came to a trial, I was for making my exit in the full bloom of youth, and quitting the ſtage in the moſt becoming manner. While the fatal moment appeared at a diſtance, I was delighted with ſuch images of mortality as the author of the following verſes has deſcribed, and with great gaiety repeated theſe lines.

Indulgent Death, prepare thy gentle dart,
To ſtrike a willing and unguarded heart!
Where are thy dreadful looks, and gloomy train?
Fantaſtic mortals all theſe terrors feign.

Thou

Thou haſt an angel's ſmile, and heav'nly grace;
I find tranſporting beauties in thy face,
And yield, unforc'd, unto thy cold embrace.
I come a joyful captive to thy arms;
This moment has for me ten thouſand charms.
For thee all human things I here reſign;
My ſpotleſs faith and virgin-vows are thine.
Myrtillo's *ſighs, and* Sylvia's *tears, in vain*
In theſe dull regions would my ſoul retain:
Forbear your fruitleſs grief; I go to prove
Unbounded pleaſures, and immortal love.
Oh, let me, unmoleſted, cloſe my eyes;
We'll meet again in yonder bleſsful ſkies!
Young virgins, haſte, a flow'ry wreath prepare,
And dreſs with guiltleſs ornaments my hair;
Adorn me with the ſummer's painted pride,
And lay the veſtments of the dead aſide;
Nor let a penſive look or mournful tear,
To cloud the luſtre of your eyes appear:
Each nymph be dreſs'd in robes of ſpotleſs light,
The foldings ſtreaming far with ſilver white;
Let ſmiles on all your lovely faces ſhine,
Nor at my glorious deſtiny repine:
With decent joy conduct me to the tomb,
And hang your garlands round my ſolitary room.

This is to expire in heroics, to give up the ghoſt with a poetical decorum, and to be interred *à-la-mode d'Arcadia.* Such ſentiments as theſe may pleaſingly amuſe the mind in the hours of health and ſerenity; but it requires a ſtrength ſuperior to all human fortitude to ſupport the ſoul in the agonies of ſeparation. There the aids of Reaſon and Nature fail: only a power divine can diſperſe the fatal gloom, and brighten it into celeſtial day.

This long letter is owing to your own curioſity, and muſt be the excuſe of,

MADAM,

Your's, &c.

SYLVIA.

LET-

LETTER VI.

To LETICIA; *giving an account of the death of* AMANDA.

I Am juſt returned from paying my laſt ceremony to the remains of the late beautiful *Amanda*. The ſurpriſing ſtate in which for ſeveral weeks the corpſe lay, the richneſs of the coffin, or the pomp with which ſhe was interred, could no way diſguiſe from my thoughts the melancholy circumſtances that attended the laſt ſcene of her life. I never think of the manner of her death, but a thouſand terrors riſe in my imagination, to reproach me for joining with the reſt of her flatterers, in concealing her danger, and ſoothing her with hopes of recovery, till death convinced her of the fatal deluſion.

On this ſubject I hope you will give me leave to be ſerious. My youth, which you ſo often object againſt the gravity of my temper, is no argument in this caſe; the fair *Amanda* was ſtill younger, and yet, after all her bloom and vivacity, I ſaw her a pale and ſenſeleſs carcaſe.

How lately did this celebrated thing
Shine in the box, and ſparkle in the ring!

It is true, the mouldering clay, by a ſtately monument, is diſtinguiſhed from vulgar duſt: but how poor a conſolation is that to an immortal ſpirit, fated to endleſs miſery, or unbounded joy!

You may laugh, and in poor wild wit ridicule theſe [illegible]mn reflexions, and lampoon me with the character of a ſaint; but, my dear *Leticia*, this mirth would be more unſeaſonable and ridiculous than my morals. However, I am more charitable than to accuſe you of ſuch levity.

Since you have put me, by your own commands, on this melancholy account, I hope it will be for your advantage, when you come to act the cloſing part of life.

I told you, in my laſt letter, the accidental reaſon of being in the ſame houſe with *Amanda*, and her full reſolution not to go into the country, however neceſſary it was for her health. No argument could prevail with her to quit the amuſements of the town, in which ſhe had always

always a ſhare, till the poſitive order of her phyſicians confined her from going abroad. Her diſtemper was lingering, but incurable; this, in my hearing, the doctor owned to her eldeſt ſiſter, in whoſe family ſhe was. He told us, that he thought two or three months would be the utmoſt limits of her life; which he begged might be concealed, and that we would keep her as chearful as poſſible. But the natural gaiety of her temper prevented that care; for her buſineſs was, to get rid of time and leiſure. She could not go to the maſquerade, but took care to let her acquaintance know how welcome their appearance, in every fantaſtic diſguiſe, would be in her own apartment. She languiſhed after the delights of the ſtage; but, to ſupply that, orders were given for ſome farce or comedy to be read for her diverſion. Sometimes a game at piquet paſſed away the tedious moments: ſhe has often kept the cards in her hands, till a ſwooning-fit interrupted the important affair. This, you will think, was a pious preparation for the laſt change! a glorious manner of concluding the action of human life!

Her beauty was as much her joy and contemplation as ever. She was exceeding pale; but there was a certain elegance in her features, and ſomething ſo peculiarly charming in her air, that triumphed over her indiſpoſition; and to give a flush to her complexion, ſhe had prevailed with her ſiſter to change her window-curtains, which were yellow ſilk, for ſome of a bright crimſon. Her toilet took up as much of her time as her ſtrength would permit; the adjuſting a becoming and modiſh undreſs would ſometimes ſo exhauſt her ſpirits, that ſhe was forced to pauſe, and leave the mighty taſk unfiniſhed. It was but two days before ſhe died, that ſhe ordered the moſt faſhionable *deſhabille* to be ſent for from *France*; as if ſhe deſigned to expire genteelly, and appear polite, even in the languiſhments of death.

Her ſiſter, though many years older, under the influence of the ſame unhappy education, indulged the vanity of her inclination in every punctilio. Whatever was the conſequence, the dying fair muſt be diverted from every thing that was reaſonable and ſerious. One would wonder her invention could find ſuch a ſeries of impertinencies. Monkeys, parrots, buffoons, ſoft muſic, and tender

tender ſongs, were always ready to entertain every little interval of eaſe or ſtrength the poor unthinking patient had.

This to me was the moſt melancholy ſcene in the world. I have forced a ſmile, when my heart has been inwardly bleeding with grief and compaſſion. Not a day paſt, but, with tears ſtreaming from my eyes, I importuned *Marina* to let her ſiſter know her danger, and to ſend for a neighbouring clergyman, of great piety, ſometimes to pray with her, and, at leaſt, to acquaint her, ſhe was not immortal; that it was poſſible for her to die, as well as other people.

This advice ſhe rejected, as poſitively as if I had perſuaded her to ſend for an executioner, to diſpatch her ſiſter into the next world. "Then, Madam, (ſaid I), "at leaſt forbear to diſtract and hinder her from every "ſerious reflexion."

"Serious reflexion! my dear *Æmilia*, (ſhe replied), "where have you learned this cant? How long have "you practiſed that ſaintly air? Look into the glaſs, "and ſee if you can forbear laughing at yourſelf. "Would you have me put on that preciſe look, and "murder my ſiſter, by telling her, that ſhe had but a "month to live! It would infallibly throw her into "the agonies of death. You cannot be ſo barbarous "to give me this advice! You know what effect our "pious fraud had, of putting St *Auſtin's meditations* in"to her hands, inſtead of *Otway's plays*; the accidental "opening it at a meditation on death, had almoſt "thrown her into a convulſion. But this (continued "ſhe) is the effect of your ſtrange notions. You repre"ſent the Supreme Being in ſuch a gloomy view, that "it makes you perfectly ſuperſtitious. My thoughts, "I confeſs, are more lightſome and free; I believe the "mercies of Heaven unbounded, and that there is no"thing in theſe little gaieties offenſive to God, or in"jurious to man. Nor indeed is a future ſtate of pu"niſhment any part of my creed. I make no queſtion "but my ſiſter will be inſenſible or happy whenever ſhe "dies, and it ſhall be my buſineſs to make her ſo the "ſhort ſpace ſhe has to live, which may be a month "or two longer, by the doctor's conjectures the laſt

"viſit

" viſit he made. Come, (added ſhe), you muſt go " with me, and endeavour to divert her; but pray put " off that ſanctified aſpect, and try to look a little more " like an inhabitant of this world."

I could not refuſe attending her to *Amanda*'s apartment; whom we found in a muſing melancholy poſture; which to divert, *Marina* told her, ſhe looked exceeding well, and nothing could be more genteel than the *deſhabille* in which ſhe appeared. This a little brightened the chagrin on her viſage, and made her ſomething attentive to the pranks of a new monkey, which her page had juſt introduced to divert his fair miſtreſs; who, in the midſt of the recreation, was ſeized with a fainting-fit, ſunk back in an eaſy chair, and, after a few hours convulſive pangs, gave up the ghoſt.

I have been ſo particular in this account, in hopes it will have a laſting influence on your conduct; and, by being faithful to my living friend, I may atone, if poſſible, for my inſincerity to the dead. I have a thouſand and a thouſand times reproached myſelf, for not letting *Amanda* plainly know her danger, leaving the event to Heaven. I am convinced it was my duty, in ſpite of all the falſe rules by which the friendſhip of the world is guided.

Theſe two ſiſters had the misfortune, in their early years, to loſe their mother, and were left to the conduct of a father, who made it his pride to think and live freely. He looked on all religion as a ſtate-policy, and put the *Bible* and *Alcoran* on a level. With theſe principles he perverted his daughters minds; and, except obſerving the ſtricteſt forms of honour and reputation, they were governed by no rule but their caprice, and the faſhions of the age. Thus they ſaw their father live, and thus they ſaw him die, entirely negligent and thoughtleſs of any thing beyond the period of human life. Inſtead of prayers and pious meditations, one of his libertine companions read *Dryden*'s tranſlation of *Lucretius* to him, in his laſt hours; while fearleſs and inſenſible he met death, and all its ſucceeding horrors.

Amanda's death has made a deep impreſſion on my thoughts; I have bid the modiſh world adieu, and am now retired to my brother's country-ſeat. You may

call it the ſpleen, but I hope it is the effect of juſt reaſoning, that I have never read any thing ſince I came hither, but books of devotion. Mr *Law*'s excellent treatiſe of Chriſtian perfection has been inſtructive to me. The character of *Miranda* has raiſed a noble emulation in my mind, though I deſpair of reaching that perfection.

If you make me a viſit, you will not find me engaged in cards at one-and-thirty, nor telling riddles, or drawing valentines with my country-neighbours; but muſing by the ſide of a gentle caſcade, or ſitting in ſome fragrant bower, liſtening to the ſongs of heaven in Dr *Watts*'s pious numbers.

Hark! how beyond the narrow bounds
Of time and ſpace they run,
And ſpeak in moſt majeſtic ſounds
The godhead of the Son;

How on the Father's breaſt he lay,
The darling of his ſoul,
Infinite years before the day,
Or heav'ns began to roll.

And now they ſink their lofty tone,
And milder notes they play;
And bring th' eternal Godhead down,
To dwell in humble clay.

If this long letter ſhould give you the ſpleen, I hope it will be your advantage. Nothing but that is the intention of,

MADAM,

Your moſt humble ſervant,

ÆMILIA.

LETTER VII.

The anſwer, to ÆMILIA.

YOur letter, I hope, will be a reſtraint on the great levity of my temper. The account of *Amanda*'s death will leave me without excuſe, if I ſhould carry my vanity ſo far, as to act the laſt part of life with ſo little

little propriety. I cannot, without the warmeſt gratitude to Heaven, reflect on the advantage of a different education and principles, which I hope will never be effaced from my ſoul.

But, my dear *Æmilia*, I ſhall never be ſo good as you would have me, nor as I ſincerely deſire to be. I have yet ſome tender engagements to break, before I bid adieu to the world, and rank myſelf in the number of departed ſpirits. I cannot on a ſudden contract ſuch intimacies with inviſible beings, as to abandon all my material acquaintance. I deſpair of following you and *Miranda*, who, if you were Roman Catholics, are in a fair way of being canonized, as many a miſerable ſinner has been before you. Of whatever religion I am, it is certain I ſhall never be numbered in the ſame claſs with St *Winefred*.

You love poetry, and it is a pleaſure to me to oblige you with any thing writ on a ſubject ſo agreeable to your taſte, as theſe verſes inſcribed to Mrs *M*———; a perſon of ſtrict piety, though ſhe does not turn recluſe, and live in a grotto; but converſes freely with the polite world, and keeps an unblemiſhed character in it. I will leave you now to your ſhady retreats, and murmuring brooks.

On SOLITUDE.

Inſcribed to Mrs M———.

YE groves, and flow'ry vales, in you we find
The firſt unblemiſh'd joys for man deſign'd;
Your charming ſcenes th' attentive mind ſupply
With pleaſure in its nice variety.
Nature does here her virgin-ſmiles afford,
And ſhews us paradiſe again reſtor'd;
Our ſouls their former harmony acquire,
And vexing care, and conſcious guilt retire.
Propitious Solitude! thou kind retreat
From all the vain amuſements of the great!
In thee alone, without diſguſt, we prove
The endleſs ſweets of innocence and love.
Beauty and wit may find a refuge here:
Unenvy'd ev'n *Belinda* might appear;

Each nymph would yield the unconteſted prize,
And every ſwain pay homage to her eyes.
Flouriſh, ye gentle ſhades and rural ſeats,
Let endleſs verdure deck your ſoft retreats;
Peace dwell upon your banks, ye ſilver ſtreams,
The Muſes chaſte delights, and conſtant themes!
For ever you the poet's breaſt inſpire
With ſprightly joys, and wake the golden lyre.
Retir'd in fragrant bow'rs, the *Hebrew* King
For *Pharaoh*'s daughter touch'd the tuneful ſtring;
The fair *Egyptian*'s charms his ſoul poſſeſt,
And fill'd with ſacred ecſtaſies his breaſt;
Celeſtial numbers melted from his tongue,
In human figures truths divine were ſung;
While *Lebanon*'s high cedars lent an ear,
And *Siloe* roſe above its banks to hear;
Hermon and *Carmel* kept the pleaſing lay,
And *Sharon*'s painted vale appear'd more gay.
What pow'r, inchanting Solitude, is thine!
That men, for thee, the deareſt ties reſign.
For thee the monarch lays his crown aſide,
And the young lover quits his weeping bride;
The hero gives the chace of honour o'er,
And fame, and glorious conqueſt, tempt no more;
The ſofter ſex, with fearleſs piety,
To woods and ſavage wilds have follow'd thee.
Fair *Magdalen* the flatt'ring world declin'd,
And to a narrow cave her charms confin'd.
In *Herod*'s wanton court admir'd ſhe ſhone,
And all the tempting paths of vice had known;
To her's, the beauties of the *Hebrew* race,
Rachel and *Tamar*'s boaſted fame, gave place;
Love triumph'd in her voice, her looks, and mien,
And love in all her fatal form was ſeen;
A thouſand youthful hearts her pow'r obey'd,
And homage to her ſoft dominion paid.
But thus in Nature's gayeſt bloom admir'd,
A penitent ſhe glorioufly retir'd;
Her coſtly ornaments are laid aſide,
With all the vain addreſs of female pride;
Her hair neglected, o'er her boſom flow'd,
And charms beyond the reach of art beſtow'd;

A mourning-robe ſhe wore, a penſive grace,
And ſoft remorſe, ſat on her lovely face;
A vaulted rock for her retreat ſhe choſe,
Among the clifts a murm'ring fountain roſe.
Here contemplation, pray'r, and lofty praiſe,
In ſolemn order, meaſur'd out her days:
To heaven her vows with early ardour fled,
Before the ſun his morning-glories ſpread;
When from his height he pour'd down golden ſtreams;
Her wing'd devotion met his noon-day beams;
Till in the weſt with fainter light he ſhone,
Untir'd the heav'nly votary went on:
The moon ſerene in midnight-ſplendor ſat,
With countleſs ſtars, attending on her ſtate;
The cares and noiſy buſ'neſs of the day,
In reſt, and ſoothing dreams, diſſolv'd away;
The drowſy waters crept along the ſhore,
And ſhepherds pin'd upon the banks no more;
The trees their whiſpers ceas'd, the gentle gale
No longer danc'd along the dewy vale;
The peaceful echoes, undiſturb'd with ſound,
Lay ſlumb'ring in the cavern'd hills around;
Faction, and care, and midnight-riot ſlept;
But ſtill the lovely ſaint her holy vigils kept.

If you could but find ſuch a convenient habitation as this, it would be to your heart's content. For my part, I ſhall never hide my virtue in obſcurity; it ſhall not be my fault, if the world is not inſtructed by my example. But to be ſerious, I verily believe we have both the ſame important intereſts in view, though we are ſo different in our tempers. We never meet, but it puts me in mind of the two weeping and laughing philoſophers. The very ſame cauſe has often had the oppoſite effect on our diſpoſitions; but in ſpite of this ſeeming contradiction, that ſacred amity by which we are united, ſhall never be violated by,

MADAM,

Your moſt obedient humble ſervant,

LETICIA.

LETTER VIII.

To LETICIA, *in anſwer to the foregoing letter.*

IF you have heard of my brother's death, you can be no ſtranger to the exceſs of my grief The poem you ſent, came very ſeaſonably. In the *Fair Penitent* I found a plan of life, ſuited to my melancholy temper; which has found more relief by a ſort of viſionary conſolation, than from all the efforts of reaſon. You have often thought fit to divert me with your ſleeping as well as waking reveries, and I know I cannot oblige you more than by relating this uncommon dream.

Whether it was the excurſion of fancy, or whether the ſcene was diſpoſed by an angel, I cannot determine. But as I was ſitting in a ſummer-houſe, my uſual retreat in an afternoon, reading *Milton*'s elegy on *Lycidas*, a downy ſlumber cloſed my eyes, and ſunk my ſorrows in the pleaſing oblivion.

I found myſelf in a place gay as the poet's deſcription of the *Cyprian* groves. Beneath an inviting ſhade I reſted on a bank of violets, and, without ſurpriſe, ſaw my brother in a glittering habit, and beautiful beyond the race of men, approaching. He ſeated himſelf by me, and with a ſmile of celeſtial charity thus began.

" It is with the higheſt ſatisfaction, my dear ſiſter, " I come to give you a relation that will animate your " virtue, as you aſſiſted mine in a ſtate of mortal imper- " fection. You know I had ſome intervals of doubt, " and nature ſhrunk at the entrance of the gloomy val- " ley; the darkneſs was untried and impenetrable. " But how great was my ſurpriſe, when I found this " momentary night ſucceeded by an eternal noon! " while my guardian angel, with an aſpect of ineffable " ſweetneſs, bid me follow him.

" I obeyed. In an inſtant the earth was loſt to my " view, the ſun diminiſhed to a ſtar; innumerable " worlds were paſſed, with a ſpeed ſwifter than a morn- " ing-ray; the gates of heaven now appeared, and " at the angel's command rolled back on their golden " hinges. But what glories were diſcloſed, no language " on earth can deſcribe! Omnipotence and infinite

" wiſdom

" wiſdom ſeemed without limits here to have been ex-
" erted. Through inchanting groves, I traced the de-
" licious borders, where the fountains of life pour out
" their ſtreams: paſſing from one ſcene of wonders to
" another, ardent to pay my homage, I preſſed forward
" to the ſacred throne.

" The ſupreme benignity at once beamed forth on
" me. Loſt in ecſtaſy, I fell proſtrate before my Sove-
" reign; when, with accents that breathed immortal joy
" and harmony, he bid me riſe to perfect purity and
" bliſs.

" A ſtarry tiara was placed on my head, and a golden
" lute in my hand. I mingled with the grand aſſembly,
" the thouſand times ten thouſand, ranſomed from eve-
" ry language and tribe on earth: with them I joined
" my grateful tribute to the Great Benefactor of man-
" kind, whoſe ſufferings and death had given me accept-
" ance, victory, and life. I rejoiced in God my Savi-
" our; I triumphed in the height of his exaltation; in-
" finite majeſty, ſoftened by equal love, appeared in his
" form, the brightneſs of the divinity, the joy of hea-
" ven, the theme of every celeſtial ſong.

" I have made this impreſſion on your ſleeping ima-
" gination, being permitted to give you no other ac-
" count of my happineſs. Be not impatient of the af-
" flictions of life. The whole of your mortal duration
" is but a moment, to the future recompence. If you
" live to the honour of your Maker, and the advantage
" of your companions on earth, it will for ever heighten
" the tranſports of your joy in the realms of light."

Here, with ſoft melody, the pleaſing ſcene vaniſhed. I waked at the imaginary muſic, and found it had left a calm and ſedate compoſure in my ſoul. Like a beam from heaven it diſperſed the gloom, and opened a ſerene and lightſome proſpect before me.

——Ye dreary waſtes, adieu!
Reaſon, Religion, now I follow you.
Enough to nature and the grave are paid;
Behold, the fair celeſtial ſcene's diſplay'd.

It appeared too regular for a natural excurſion of fancy, but I leave that undetermined. Amidſt all your gaieties, you are as guiltleſs of incredulity as

Your humble ſervant,

ÆMILIA.

LETTER IX.

The anſwer, to ÆMILIA.

I Am not ſurpriſed, that ſuch a ſhining viſion as you have deſcribed, has allayed your grief, and reſtored the tranquillity of your mind; but I am afraid you are not yet gay enough, to excuſe the vivacity of my temper, or ſuffer me to laugh. It is without your conſent if I am happy, and very much pleaſed with any of the tranſitory vanities of this world; which, I muſt own, have ſome prevailing charms for me, from whoſe ſoft captivity I cannot yet get free.

I was laſt night at a play, in which there was the part of a princeſs well acted, and the ſentiments belonging to the character were juſt and noble; yet I was not half ſo well pleaſed, as I had often been before with the ſame repreſentation. I ſoon found the reaſon of my diſſatisfaction, and the difference between imitated and real greatneſs.——The *Princeſs Royal* was at the play, and juſt in my view. All that elegance and dignity of thought the poet had deſcribed, brightened her aſpect; every virtue was there conſpicuous; the gentle, the engaging ſmile was beyond the reach of numbers: a thouſand nameleſs graces diſcovered the innate perfections of her mind, and gave the charming Princeſs a diſtinction peculiar to conſcious merit, and beyond all imitation.

I intend you a viſit before the ſpring (that faireſt ſeaſon of the year) is paſt. I am willing to ſee you once more in this world; for I am not ſure we ſhall meet in the next, though I ſincerely deſire it. Nothing will more contribute to my happineſs than your converſation: I catch ſome emanation of your virtue, and am inſpired with new convictions of the vanity of the world: my reaſon gains ground, and my paſſions ſubſide. I may

venture

venture to look grave in your company; but, in my preſent modiſh way of life, I dare not ſo much as put on an air of thought and reflexion, nor ſeem to have any thing in the earth to do, but to amuſe myſelf, and the volatile beings I converſe with. You ſee, if I was wiſer than I really am, I ſhould take pains to conceal it, rather than be ſingular and unfaſhionable.

I have ſent the verſes I promiſed to procure for you,

On BEAUTY.

VIctorious Beauty! by what potent charm
Doſt thou the ſoul of all its force diſarm!
We bleſs our chains, abhor our liberty,
And yield the unconteſted prize to thee.
Whether we raſh or calm deſigns purſue,
Thine is the glorious motive ſtill in view.
For thee we ſearch the wide creation round,
But thou art no where in perfection found;
Some blemiſh ſtill remains on mortal pride,
And crouding years its airy boaſts deride.
Triumphant beauty ſits in *Flavia*'s eyes;
But while we gaze, the trembling luſtre dies.
Bellair's compleatly form'd with ev'ry grace,
A faultleſs ſhape, and an inchanting face;
In all his motions, each becoming air,
Greatneſs and native elegance appear;
Careleſs and free, in life's deluding bloom,
While envious Death threatens a haſty doom,
Some gentle miſtreſs, full of love and truth,
Shall ſoon lament the dear unrival'd youth.
Thou lovely, fleeting, tranſitory thing,
From what immenſe perfection doſt thou ſpring!
To what compleat original return,
While we thy ſhort appearance vainly mourn!
Howe'er our doating thoughts miſtake the way
To certain bliſs, thine is a friendly ray
That points the paſſage to unclouded day.
Ye heav'nly forms, in all your pomp appear,
And ſhew us what immortal beauties are,
What life, what roſy bloom your faces wear!

Put

Put on each ſmiling grace, and conqu'ring charm,
And all the force of mortal love diſarm.
For ſtill our reſtleſs thoughts take glorious aims,
Howe'er ſeduc'd by theſe inferior flames;
The leading paſſion, the ſupreme deſire,
To things divine and infinite aſpire.
Eternal Excellence! 'tis only thee
We ſearch, through Nature's bright variety!
Our eager wiſhes, with impetuous force,
To thee, unknown, direct their endleſs courſe.
'Tis thee we ſeek and love, for thee we pine;
The pow'rful charm, the ſoft attraction's thine;
To thee theſe ſighs, theſe tender vows aſcend,
Th' unſeen Divinity we ſtill attend;
Sick of theſe fading toys, our thoughts preſs on,
To joys untaſted, excellence unknown.
Thou Great Original of all that's fair,
Whoſe glories no ſimilitude can bear,
Before the darting ſplendor of thy eyes,
The pride of all created beauty dies!

This I hope is the latent ſenſe of my ſoul, in all its motions, though I am not yet ſo wiſe as you would have me, nor as I intend to be. But in whatever character you put me, do me the juſtice to believe I am ſincerely

Your's, &c.

LETICIA.

LETTER X.

From LYSANDER, *giving a relation of the tragical end of his* Valet de Chambre.

My Lord,

YOur commands ſhall be punctually obeyed, whatever reluctance I find to enter on this relation, of which you have been ſo imperfectly informed.

The young *Valet de Chambre*, whoſe ſtory you inquire after, was the ſame I brought out of *France*, whom you took ſome notice of when I met your Lordſhip

ſhip in my return to *England*; where I was received again into my mother's family, my father being in my abſence deceaſed.

I had a young ſiſter about fifteen, of whom I was always exceeding fond; and now thought it my part to ſee her as advantageouſly married, as her birth and fortune required. After I had ſpent ſome time at home, I propoſed ſeveral good matches for her; every one of which ſhe obſtinately refuſed.

This gave me ſome ſuſpicion of my *Valet*, who appeared to be a handſome youth about eighteen. He had a charming voice, and ſung to a lute, which he touched with ſurpriſing ſkill and ſweetneſs. My ſiſter loved muſic, and he was always ambitious of entertaining her. There was no difficulty to diſcover her inclinations; truth and nature appeared in all her actions. But *Palanty*'s conduct was paſt my penetration. However, I reſolved to part with him, to prevent my ſiſter's infamy. As diſſolute and abandoned as my own manners had been, I had the niceſt ſenſe of what would touch her reputation. With a reſtleſs mind I was one day walking in my garden, and, turning with ſome precipitation down a ſhady alley, I ſurpriſed *Palanty* reading a paper; which ſuddenly ſnatching from him, convinced me of my ſiſter's folly.

I took the opportunity immediately to diſmiſs him; and ſeeing me reſolved, he fell on his knees, intreating me not to expoſe a ſtranger in a foreign country; confeſſing the whole truth, that ſhe was an unhappy woman, the Cardinal of *B*———'s niece, who, governed by the dictates of her affection, had followed me in that diſguiſe.

This ſhe told me with a face unſtained with a roſy bluſh, or the leaſt appearance of that modeſt diſorder ſo natural and becoming her ſex. My confuſion was much greater than her's; and yet one would not think me over baſhful, nor extremely ſcrupulous, with regard to my character. Her impudence made me almoſt ſuſpect the truth of what ſhe told me: but I was not in an inquiſitive humour, and cared not what ſhe was, if I had never been imbarraſſed with her. I had ſeen her face too often to find any charm of novelty in it. The paſſion ſhe pretended for me was a myſtery, when I remembered ſhe had

had been without conſtraint a witneſs, as well as pimp, to many of my criminal amours.

However, as I was now without anxiety for my ſiſter, this artful woman, by her importunities, prevailed on my eaſy temper to let her ſtay in the family till ſhe could find ſome other ſettlement. She ſtaid; and in ſome moment of darkneſs ſeduced me to her ruin, and my own infamy. She was with child; I got lodgings for her, and, pretending ſome diſguſt, diſmiſſed her as a *Valet*; my mother and ſiſter being entirely ignorant of the diſguiſe of her ſex.

In the mean time, my mother, who took the chagrin of my temper for a reformation of manners, was very ſolicitous with me to conclude a marriage ſhe had propoſed to a young woman of great merit, and a very agreeable perſon. I purſued the affair but coldly, and in mere complaiſance to a moſt indulgent parent; till, by frequent converſation with this charming woman, ſhe engaged me by all the ties of reaſon and virtuous love. The modeſty of her behaviour, joined to the moſt ſincere and obliging temper in the world, ſecured her empire. Her wit was ſparkling and inoffenſive; deceit and malice were ſtrangers to her breaſt; a thouſand nameleſs beauties apppeared in all her conduct. Till now I never knew the force of love, nor any of the refined ſentiments that noble paſſion inſpired. In what guiltleſs joys did the hours paſs that I ſpent with my lovely *Cimene!*

But what tongue can expreſs the anguiſh I felt from my criminal affair with *Palanty!* I was forced to viſit her, for fear ſhe ſhould divulge the ſecret, in revenge, and ruin me with the charming *Cimene*. You are a ſtranger, my Lord, to theſe vexations; your whole conduct has been governed by the rules of honour and reaſon. Oh, may my worſt enemy never know the curſe of an engagement with a lewd, imperious woman! Fear kept me a ſlave to her caprice, and forced me to endure all the inſolence and rage of language ſhe had practiſed in her maſculine habit among her inferiors; nor durſt I offer to controul her expenſive vanity, being willing to ſoften her, till ſhe was paſt the dangerous ſtate ſhe was now in.

But

But no conſideration could make me delay my intended marriage, let the event be what it would. The day was ſet, that Heaven, in *Cimene*, gave me the greateſt bleſſing of my life. The news was ſoon ſpread, and reached *Palanty*'s ears: who procured a deadly ſleeping-draught, and, unſuſpected by thoſe about her, deſperately ſwallowed it, and ſlept her laſt; leaving a paper on her toilet, with an account who ſhe was, and her adventure with me.

This accident was ſoon told to my mother; who was loſt in ſorrow, till I aſſured her, *Palanty* had impoſed on my ignorance by her habit, until a few months before I diſmiſſed her; and that by her artifice, and not my own inclination, I had been inſnared into this misfortune. As much a rake as I had been, I could not but have a ſecret averſion to a woman of that diſſolute character. But the infamy of this tragical event has juſtly fallen on me, ſince in all my other intrigues I had been the ſeducer, and too often triumphed in the ſpoils of unguarded innocence.

The lovely *Cimene*, to whom I had been but two days married, inſtead of betraying any female weakneſs, with peace in her looks, and perſuaſion in her tongue, endeavoured to compoſe the grief and diſtraction with which ſhe found this infamous event had filled my thoughts. In her calm and unruffled temper I ſaw the privilege of a ſpotleſs life, and a mind unclouded with guilt, free from uneaſy reflexions on what was paſt, or reſtleſs expectations of what was to come.

This is juſt the reverſe of my condition. The unhappy end of this miſerable woman, the double murder of herſelf and unborn infant, the ſhare I have had in her misfortunes, has brought my former crimes in their blackeſt ſhape to my remembrance.

'Tis conſcious guilt's the emphaſis of hell,
Were all but fables elſe, the prieſthood tell.

Like furies, the ghoſts of my paſt ſins ſtart up, and terrify my reſtleſs imagination; my debauches, quarrels, licentious amours, paſs in a confuſed ſucceſſion before me. This is what ſecretly blaſts my joys, when to the world they appear in their full bloom.

'Tis not a month ſince my ſofteſt wiſhes were crowned in the poſſeſſion of the charming *Cimene*; I am yet ſurrounded with the congratulations of my friends on the happy occaſion; every other circumſtance of life ſeems to conſpire to my ſatisfaction. You will aſk me, my Lord, why I am not eaſy and thankful in this circle of earthly enjoyments? What is the hindrance? Where is the obſtacle?

'Tis guilt, 'tis conſcious guilt! What was the matter with the firſt bold tranſgreſſor? Why did he run to the thickets to cover him? why ſhelter himſelf among the trees of *Eden?* What could make him fly that gracious preſence, at which innocent nature ſmiled, the new creation bloomed afreſh, and the morning-ſtars rejoiced? Why is he fearful in the cool of the evening, who at the dawning of the ſame day knew no ſuch paſſion? What has made this ſudden alteration? Some mighty change muſt be within, for all without is the ſame. Is he not in paradiſe ſurrounded with all the pleaſures of ſenſe! the warbling muſic of the groves to delight his ear; to charm his ſight, the gay creation unfolds its various beauties; the flowers breathe ambroſial fragrance to cheer him; the balmy air is yet unruffled by tempeſts, the ſun ſhines in its original ſplendor, and Nature ſtands dreſſed in all her primæval perfection! The man is in exact temperament formed for immortality, and juſt warm from his great Creator's hands; from whom, with wild amazement, now he flies, and ſeeks the covert of the woods for ſhelter.

This was all the effect of guilt, that ſecret wound that bleeds within! You will excuſe my dwelling ſo long on this melancholy theme, when I tell you, 'tis ſome relief to that anguiſh which is a ſecret to all the world but your Lordſhip. I am well acquainted with your compaſſion and fidelity; and am going to make a farther trial of them, by a relation which will ſurpriſe you. I will not exact your belief, nor enter into the reaſon and philoſophy of it; nor will I preſume to contradict it, ſhould you tell me I am diſtracted, that all I am going to diſcover is the effect of frenzy. As it was but a momentary appearance, I will aſſert nothing. But as I was indulging my melancholy temper, in the retreat of

a ſummer-houſe, ſitting very late in a penſive poſture, leaning on a table, a pale ſulphurous gleam of light appeared, that ſeemed to hover round a form reſembling *Palanty*'s: who with a rueful aſpect, dreſſed in the habiliments of the dead, ſtood before me, and, with an air of unutterable anguiſh, laid this letter on the table by me, and immediately vaniſhed. I ſhould think this no more than a dream, if the paper had not been real. The dreadful contents are as follows.

To LYSANDER.

"I Am now convinced, by a terrible demonſtration, "of thoſe truths I once denied. To my coſt, I find, "that hell is no poetic fiction, no enthuſiaſtic dream, "nor pious fable of ſome mercenary prieſt. This was "the language of my impiety, when I followed you in "an impudent diſguiſe; and, to ſupport my maſculine "character, acted the Atheiſt, by ridiculing all that "was ſacred, till I was given up of Heaven to the "ſtrongeſt deluſion, and the moſt daring infidelity.

"Thus abandoned, I ſwallowed the deadly potion, "with a full preſumption of mingling with my native "duſt, and being inſenſible for ever. But the inſtant "death had cloſed my eyes, and laid his icy hand on my "heart, a ſcene altogether new and ſurpriſing opened "before me. The juſt unembodied ſoul, in the height "of aſtoniſhment, would fain have ſhrunk back again "into its late warm habitation, from whence I had vio-"lently forced it. The attempt was vain; the avenues "of mortal life were for ever ſhut, and I found myſelf "the deriſion of thoſe malignant ſpirits, who had been "my ſeducers to this unnatural fact.

"What execrations did I not utter againſt myſelf "and them! I had indulged the rage, and practiſed "the language of hell in my mortal ſtate; but here all "was fruitleſs and unfeared; I was the captive of thoſe "infernal miniſters, who waited to conduct me to the "frontiers of eternal night. I caſt my eyes to the hea-"venly luminaries, and the full blazing ſun, whoſe light "I was to loſe for ever; I bid adieu to the fair creation, "whoſe almighty Former I had denied; I caſt my eyes

" to the ſparkling gates of bliſs, and with infinite an-
" guiſh found them ſhut againſt me; and hurried far
" through chaos and primæval darkneſs, (far from the
" limits of celeſtial day), I reached my deſtined habita-
" tion; a diſmal region, waſte and wide, of which no
" mortal can form a conception, nor find a name for
" half its terrors.

" Oh! fly the paths that lead to theſe mournful a-
" bodes. As I have been, in my mortal ſtate, the in-
" ſtrument of hell to entice you to ſin, your perdition
" would vaſtly aggravate my own miſery; and I am
" ſuffered to warn you, as the rich libertine in the go-
" ſpel would have warned his brethren, that you come
" not to this place of torment.

" I muſt no farther reveal the ſecrets of the deep;
" but am commanded back to the ſeats of impenetrable
" night, and endleſs deſpair!

PALANTY."

That this letter was left on the table, writ in a character exactly like *Palanty*'s, is fact. Whether the reſt was real or imaginary, I dare not decide.

Your Lordſhip's, &c.

LYSANDER.

LETTER XI.

Letter the ſecond, To my Lord ———, *from* LYSANDER.

My Lord,

YOU are entirely at your liberty to reject the relation I ſent you. I never intended to make your belief in ghoſts and apparitions a teſt of your Chriſtianity. That ſtands on a more ſure foundation, and has all the evidence of reaſon and miracles to ſupport it. I am an inſtance of its divine power, by which I am tranſformed from the brutal to the human nature. I can now glory in that privilege I lately deſpiſed, and, without vanity, claim the dignity of a reaſonable creature.

My penitence was ſincere, and found acceptance from Heaven. The ſacred illumination ſcattered the gloom of

of guilt and deſpair, while in gentle whiſpers the Eternal Spirit breathed pardon, peace, and heavenly benedictions to my ſoul; I felt the powerful influence, the flames of celeſtial love were kindled, my fears vaniſhed like clouds before the morning-ſun.

" All hail, (I cried), ye unknown delights, ye un-
" experienced pleaſures! Compared to you, what are
" my paſt enjoyments! what are all the amuſements of
" ſenſe! I never lived till now; I knew no more than
" the name, the ſhadow of happineſs; but now I wake
" to life, and taſte the joys of angels."

I hope, my Lord, you will not think theſe the flights of imagination. You that have always believed the articles of religion, and kept its bright rewards in view, can reflect on ſuch ſubjects more calmly; but to me theſe glorious truths are all novelty and ſurpriſe. If a wretch from his infancy had been kept in a gloomy dungeon, and juſt delivered from the dark confinement, with what tranſports would he ſalute the great luminaries of heaven, while one that from his birth had been bleſſed with their beams would meet them without emotion?

Theſe important ſubjects engage my whole attention; the creation wears new beauties; where-ever I caſt my eyes, I meet impreſſions of the Divinity; I trace his footſteps among the ſilver rills, and invoke him in the ſilent grove. You know my poetic humour, by too many looſe compoſures; but my muſe is now conſecrated, and in ſome ſylvan retreat often aſſiſts my evening-devotion.

Permit me, my Lord, to repeat my laſt invocation to the heavenly Power.

Deſcend, Celeſtial Spirit, from above,
The uncreated ſource of light and love!
Perpetual calms, and ſweet ſecurity,
Concord, and graceful order, wait on thee;
Decay, and death, thy quick'ning rays exclude,
And ſpringing nature ſmiles, by thee renew'd;
Darkneſs, and wild confuſion, ſoon retire,
Before thy clear, illuminating fire;
To gentle thoughts thou doſt our boſoms move,
And breath'ſt the ſoft melodious ſoul of love.

O thou who mad'ſt the new creation bloom
With active life, and quick'ning virtue, come!
Come, like the ſilent fall of ev'ning-dews,
Whoſe moiſture all the flow'ry field renews;
Breathe on me, like the ſweet Sabean *gale,*
That fans with roſy wings the verdant dale;
Smooth as the gliding muſic, that controuls
Each human care, and ſteals upon our ſouls;
In triumph, with the heav'nly train deſcend
Of loves and graces, which on thee attend.
In ſilent ſhades, by ſome clear fountain's fall,
Thou oft haſt anſwer'd to a mortal's call;
Oft in ſome artleſs cave, or humble cell,
Thou with the ſons of men haſt deign'd to dwell,
And left behind the high celeſtial ſeats,
To viſit mortals, in their low retreats.
When holy vows thy kind deſcent invite,
Thou hear'ſt the gentle whiſpers with delight;
While Nature tir'd her midnight-ſabbath keeps,
And ev'ry thought, but pure devotion, ſleeps:
The ſmiling ſtars roll on, the dazzling moon,
In pomp advances to her ſilent noon;
While thy ſweet voice, ſoft as the midnight-air,
Diſpels the gloom of ev'ry earthly care,
Unfolding boundleſs proſpects of delight,
Before the piercing, intellectual ſight.
Beneath the ſacred mount, by thee inſpir'd,
The Hebrews *glorious leader ſat retir'd;*
The new-made world, and Eden's *blooming pride,*
In various ſcenes before him lay deſcry'd.
O princely ſwain, how didſt thou then deſpiſe
Th' Egyptian *court, how worthleſs in thy eyes!*
What were the grandeurs of a Royal fate,
To the diſtinctions of thy preſent ſtate!
While paradiſe, in all its charming views,
For thee, the great creating voice renews;
For thee, again, the morning-ſtars rejoice;
Again, for thee they raiſe the tuneful voice;
The ſons of God touch the melodious lyre,
And all the wide creation join the choir.
Lead me, Propitious Spirit, lead me far,
Where I no more the voice of man may hear:

You charming viſions, how you fire my ſoul,
And ev'ry thought of earthly things controul!
Through what inchanting paths, what flow'ry ways,
My fancy led, with boundleſs freedom ſtrays!
Reveal'd the avenues of pleaſure lie,
And open wide the cryſtal portals fly;
Immortal beauty ſmiles, angelic pow'rs,
In ſoft reſponſes, ſing from roſy bow'rs.

You will not blame me, being got here, if I have no inclination to deſcend. But mortality will prevail; I ſink to my native element again; where, as long as I am confined, believe me to be

Your Lordſhip's

Moſt obliged humble ſervant,

LYSANDER.

LETTER XII.

The ſequel of the ſtory of ROSELLA, *in the laſt letter of the firſt part of* Letters Moral and Entertaining.

WHen I was in the weſt, four years ſince, I wrote you word, that I had made an acquaintance in a family who lived in a little retirement, at the foot of a hill, a few miles from my houſe. I then gave you an account of the piety and beauty of thoſe exemplary recluſes; and owned, that I had not at that time forgot the charms of *Meliſſa:* but I did not tell you, that they had made an impreſſion on me, which could never be eraſed by all the modiſh ſchemes of intereſt and alliances. Nor could that darling (but miſtaken) notion of liberty hold me out againſt the deſire I had to call her mine, and make her ſo by the ſtrongeſt and happieſt ties, thoſe of marriage. I ſtruggled with my own heart, and would fain have terrified it by the laugh I ſhould raiſe among my acquaintance, when they heard that I, in the gayeſt bloom of life, and with four thouſand pounds a-year at my command, ſhould leave all the faſhionable maxims of mankind, and fall in love with a young woman, who had only beauty, and the ſanctity of her manners, to recommend

commend her. For though her birth is noble, ſhe has only three thouſand pounds, which I deſign to preſent to *Honoria* her mother, the day after our marriage; which will be ſolemnized as ſoon as my lawyer can finiſh a deed, by which I give *Meliſſa* a thouſand pounds a-year rent-charge for her life, in caſe ſhe ſhould ſurvive me.

Now I have told you my happineſs, I cannot help making you acquainted with *Roſella*'s; whoſe ſtory, you often ſaid, touched you. I went to the houſe of *Honoria*, the day after I came hither, (for now it was my only buſineſs); as ſoon as I alighted, a clean footman in a frock turned up with green, took my horſe. I expected from this to find an alteration in the family; for when I was there firſt, they had no livery ſervant. As ſoon as I came into the hall, I ſaw a beautiful young man, whoſe dreſs was entirely plain; his hair hung in natural curls without any powder, and his air and appearance ſeemed to ſuit with the ſimplicity and elegance of the other inhabitants of that happy dwelling. *Roſella* was ſitting by a table, and had a boy of about fourteen months old in her lap, roſy and ſmiling as a cherubim, who was playing with ſome flowers with which *Meliſſa* was going to dreſs a baſon. *Roſella* immediately roſe; and, coming towards me, deſired I would give her leave to preſent her huſband *Alonzo* to me. I was rejoiced at the ſound, and congratulated her upon the change of her fortune, in a manner that might convince her how ſincerely I ſhared in all that related to her. The lovely *Meliſſa* ſeemed glad to ſee me, and ran to call *Honoria* with an obliging haſte. After a few compliments were over, I inquired what had produced the alteration I ſaw. *Honoria* told me, that about two years and a half ago *Alonzo*'s father fell dangerouſly ill, and that he expreſſed an ardent deſire to ſee his ſon: upon which his wife wrote to a nephew ſhe had in *London*, (who was the moſt intimate friend *Alonzo* had upon earth), in hopes that he might poſſibly be acquainted with the place of his retreat; and begged of him, if he knew how to direct a letter, that he would write, and deſire him to come and ſee his dying father. The nephew immediately diſpatched an expreſs to *Alonzo*, who was retired into a little village in *Lancaſhire*, where he boarded in the houſe of an old clergyman, who

who had no other family than himſelf and his wife, and who were glad to have *Alonzo* with them, as he appeared a modeſt, ſober young man; for their circumſtances were too plentiful to want the advantage of a boarder. He immediately left the old people, and came home about four days before the death of his father, who was tranſported at the ſight of him; nor did he feel leſs joy, when his mother aſſured him, that *Montanor* (for that was his father's name) had, for many months before his illneſs, lived a very penitent, regular life.

As ſoon as I heard of *Alonzo*'s return, I wrote him a letter, in which I deſired to ſee him as ſoon as *Montanor*'s funeral was over, but forbad him to come till that time. He complied with me in that requeſt, as he has ever ſince done, in all that I deſired of him. About ſix weeks after, *Roſella* and he were married. I begged him to let me enjoy the company of my daughter while I lived in this ſolitary habitation; for I could not think of leaving it; and we have paſſed our time ever ſince in the moſt perfect harmony. I cannot deny him the juſtice of acknowledging to his face, that we are not only happier in our retirement than we were before, by the addition of a chearful companion, but edified and improved by the piety of his life. *Alonzo* ſeemed out of countenance at this part of her diſcourſe; and the modeſty with which he received it, ſhewed how much he deſerved the praiſe ſhe gave him. She continued to tell me, that about four months after he married *Roſella*, he received a letter from the lawyer in the village where he had boarded, to let him know, that a few weeks ago the clergyman with whom he had lived, had buried his wife, and about a fortnight after fell himſelf ill of the ſame fever, and died; that he had by his will left *Alonzo* his eſtate, which was about a hundred and eighty pounds a-year, and two thouſand pounds in money; which, added to about two hundred and fifty pounds a-year, and ſome money which his father left him, makes their fortune very eaſy.

Here *Honoria* ended her diſcourſe; and it was ſo late, that they deſired me to ſtay dinner. After which I aſked to ſpeak with her alone; and told her, I begged I might have leave to propoſe myſelf to *Meliſſa*, if her heart was not already engaged. *Honoria* aſſured me it was not,

and

and ſeemed ſurpriſed at a propoſal ſo much to *Meliſſa*'s advantage: but told me, ſhe begged I would endeavour to get *Meliſſa*'s conſent without her interpoſing her authority; ſince ſhe could not reſolve, even in ſo advantageous a thing, to force her inclination. When I named it to the young beauty, ſhe did not at firſt ſeem averſe to any thing but the leaving of her mother, which the ſmallneſs of her houſe would oblige her to. But after a few days, the nearneſs of my houſe reconciled her to that ſcruple; and I had the joy to find, that inclination had a greater ſhare than intereſt in her compliance. Rejoice with me, *Lyſander*; my happineſs in your alliance will not end at my death; the converſation I ſhall now enjoy, will fit me for eternal rewards. I will make no apology to you for the ſallies of my pleaſure, which will let me talk to you of nothing but my own affairs.

Adieu.

LETTER XIII.

To SERENA.

My dear SERENA,

AS I have always made you the confident of whatever has related to me, I cannot help giving you an account of the pleaſure and pain occaſioned by an acquaintance I have made with a young woman ſince I came hither. She was only daughter to a man who had been formerly an officer in the *Engliſh* army; but quitted it in diſcontent, and came hither with *Semanthe* his daughter, to treat with ſome people about a project of working in ſome mines, which are believed to have many large veins of ſilver in them.

Semanthe came to ſee me upon my arrival. I found ſo much wit and good-nature in her converſation, that we contracted a great intimacy, and were continually together. She had every qualification that could make her company entertaining: ſhe ſung, played on the harpſichord, painted in water-colours, and had a ſurpriſing genius for poetry. Her ſentiments on all ſubjects ſeemed juſt and noble. I thought myſelf the happieſt

pieſt perſon in the world in finding a companion ſo inſtructive and agreeable.

She told me the ſtory of her paſt life; which, deſcribed in her charming language, ſtill raiſed my eſteem. In every occurrence I had the pleaſure to find ſhe practiſed the higheſt rules of juſtice and benevolence; and, though now in the early part of her life, ſhe was guided by the niceſt rules of virtue. By a paſſion ſhe had for a perſon by whom ſhe was equally beloved, I was confirmed of the prudence of her conduct; I found that no partiality or tenderneſs could tempt her to deviate from the ſevereſt principles of modeſty and honour.

I was not at reſt till I had poured out all the ſecrets of my heart to her; which I did without the leaſt reſerve; and truſted her with a ſecret of the greateſt importance to my future tranquillity.—But what is human dependence!—I found the inmoſt ſecrets of my ſoul betrayed by the perſon in whom I had ſo entirely confided.—I knew not how to behave myſelf in this perplexity.—I had too much compaſſion for my fallen friend, to give her the pain and confuſion of hearing my reproaches; and too much ſincerity, to continue my intimacy with her: but, for my own ſecurity, I was forced to break off all further commerce with one of whoſe guilt I had the utmoſt certainty.

This is a very ſenſible affliction to me in a place where I have ſo few acquaintance, and am not in a temper to contract any new friendſhip. I could as ſoon have queſtioned my own exiſtence, as *Semanthe*'s truth; and now, tho' I cannot acquit her, I am perpetually endeavouring to mitigate her crime. I tell my heart, her error did not proceed from any malignity in her nature, but a too great confidence in ſome other friend; that ſhe, as well as I, has been deceived, and only told my ſecrets where ſhe thought ſhe might ſafely have truſted her own. I am ready to melt into tears whenever I think of her, and find more compaſſion than anger on reflecting on her conduct. Though I no longer converſe with her, it is more to make her ſenſible of her guilt, in betraying a truſt of importance, than to ſhew my own reſentment. I ſhall be for ever intereſted in her welfare; and, if my prayers have any force, ſhe will live to wear

off

off every failing that can caſt a blemiſh on a mind capable of arriving at as great a degree of perfection as human nature is capable of.

I have wrote myſelf into too melancholy a humour to ſay any more, but that I am

Your's,

ISABELLA.

LETTER XIV.

From MELINDA, *giving an account of her concealment.*

My dear ORIANA,

I Told you before I left my brother's houſe, that you ſhould hear from me as ſoon as I was ſettled; and that I would inform you of the reaſon of my flight. You have too much candour and charity to judge harſhly of my proceedings; which, could you ſee my heart, you would rather pity than condemn me for.

You have often, within theſe two laſt years, obſerved an alteration in my temper and perſon. I am no more the ſprightly florid creature that you uſed to call the emblem of health and chearfulneſs. You ſaw the change, but did not gueſs the cauſe was a ſecret, hopeleſs paſſion. I was at a play: I ſaw there one of the moſt agreeable perſons in the world. His dreſs, his behaviour, every thing was graceful and eaſy. The tragedy of *Cato* was acted. He was attentive, and ſeemed to enter into every noble ſentiment, where either the hero or lover was deſcribed. His aſpect wore the viſible characters of fortitude and virtue. He ſtood up between the acts, and turned towards the box where I ſat; and when I went out, he made way for me through the croud. But I never after ſaw him in any public place, nor knew who nor what he was. But the charming youth had made an impreſſion on my thoughts; which had ſoon a very happy effect. I grew weary of the noiſy tumultuous way of living in my brother's houſe, and refuſed ſharing in the conſtant round of diverſions that my ſiſter loved. Nor could there be any thing more diſſolute and extravagant

extravagant than the manners of this family; aſſemblies, balls, gaming,——all ſorts of riots and licentiouſneſs, I never indeed approved theſe entertainments; and was always uneaſy, without knowing how to make myſelf otherwiſe.

The paths to happineſs that religion propoſed, I was as ignorant of as the ſavage *Americans* in their native groves. *Dumain*, who married my ſiſter, was a profeſſed libertine. My parents left me very young to their care, my ſiſter being many years older than I am: and if my godfathers and godmothers, inſtead of renouncing the pomps and vanities of the world for me in my baptiſm, had ſolemnly vowed I ſhould be bred in the midſt of thoſe ſnares and ſeducing temptations, they could not more effectually have diſcharged their truſt, than by placing me in this family; whoſe *Sunday*'s amuſement was cards; for we never went to church; unleſs in a frolic, to ſpend an idle hour, in whiſpering or laughing.

However, my guardian angel did not quit his charge; but, by the impreſſion of a virtuous love, fortified my ſoul from every looſe inclination. I fled diverſions, grew fond of retirement. This ſoon gave me a habit of thinking: and if I had ſchemes of happineſs, they were all in ſome future life, beyond the grave; but my notions were clouded and imperfect. Indeed I believed there was a God, and the reproaches of my own reaſon taught me to fear him: but I had never looked in the Bible, ſince I learned to read; and was as ignorant of Chriſtianity, as a young *Hottentot* bred in a cave.

My penſive temper now deteſted vanity, in every appearance. Plays and novels no more diverted me. But wanting ſomething to read, I ſaw a Bible in the room where my ſiſter's woman lay; and, opening it, my attention was immediately engaged. The hiſtory was new to me. I carried it to my chamber; but how was I ſurpriſed, to find the life and precepts of the great founder of the Chriſtian faith, ſo different from the manners and principles of thoſe who aſſumed that ſacred profeſſion! I found myſelf in the flowery paths of ruin, nor knew how to extricate myſelf from the fatal ſnare. This was the ſecret language of my ſoul, to that inviſible power which knew its ſincerity.

Thou Ruler of the ſky, almighty Name,
Whoſe piercing eye diſcerns my riſing thoughts,
Ere they are form'd within my anxious breaſt;
Thou ſeeſt my ſoul ſtruggling to break the bands,
Which thus detain her captive to the earth:
Thou ſeeſt how vainly ſhe would ſoar on high;
Paſſion and pleaſure clog her downy wing,
Prevent her flight, and ſink her to the duſt:
There low ſhe lies, and trembling begs thy aid,
Conſcious how impotent ſhe is without thee.

My ſiſter ſoon perceived the alteration of my temper, and uſed her art to engage me in ſome criminal diverſion. But in vain; I was ſick and tired of theſe extravagancies. But what could I do? My fortune was loſt in the *South-Sea*; I was dependent on *Dumain*'s and my ſiſter's charity; and, to heighten my diſtreſs, I was importuned by my Lord ———, (who was lately married), to yield to his criminal paſſion. At this propoſal I ſtarted with horror, but could not ſhun his addreſs without quitting this diſorderly family; which I reſolved to do, and caſt myſelf on the protection of Heaven.

I left my brother's houſe juſt after dinner, and went in a hackney-coach to a woman in the city that had been my nurſe. I engaged her to ſecrecy, and got her to inquire for a place in ſome merchant's family. She ſoon ſucceeded, and introduced me to the wife of an *Eaſt-India* merchant, who lived in great ſplendor. My buſineſs was, to wait on her in the ſtation of a chambermaid. She was very handſome, modeſt, and unaffected. The orders of the family were ſo regular and peaceful, ſo perfectly the reverſe of my brother's, that I thought myſelf in another world, and among a new ſet of beings. Temperance and ſobriety reigned amidſt the height of plenty and liberality. The rooms were noble, and furniſhed with all the riches of the *Indian* world, and looked like the palace of ſome eaſtern monarch.

I found myſelf perfectly at eaſe. Dreſſing my miſtreſs was all I had to do; which was a very agreeable employment, and ſoon diſpatched. She had ſomething ſo genteel in her manner, that every thing looked graceful and becoming on her, and coſt but little trouble to make it

it ſit well. Her converſation was innocent and inſtructive; her hours ſpent in reading, or ſome little amuſement with her needle, without the leaſt inclination to rambling after balls or maſquerades.

I ſpent two or three weeks in this regular manner, my miſtreſs treating me almoſt on a level. I had not yet ſeen my maſter, who now returned from his country-houſe. But, my dear *Oriana*, think what was my affliction, when I diſcovered that he was the ſame lovely youth I had ſeen at the play. As ſoon as he ſaw me, he turned as red as crimſon, and I as pale as aſhes. He paſſed by me, and went immediately into my miſtreſs's room. It was almoſt two years ſince I had ſeen him, and I had ſome hopes I was forgot. However, I reſolved to quit the family, if I found he knew me, or that my friendſhip for his wife did not extinguiſh my paſſion.——On my maſter's part, I ſoon found reaſon to be eaſy. I hardly ever ſaw him; he was either at the *Exchange*, or when at home, engaged in a ſeries of beneficent actions. His wealth was immenſe, which he diſperſed with an unequalled generoſity. He aſſiſted honeſt traders, that had but a ſmall ſtock, paid the debts of priſoners, relieved the widow, and redreſſed the injured and oppreſſed. This was every day's buſineſs; which yet never intrenched on his hours of devotion, in private or public.

I now grew eaſy. A man of this character was not like to indulge a guilty flame in his own breaſt, or to flatter it in mine; beſides, his abſence would ſoon relieve me; for he intended to go to the *Indies* with the fleet, which was to ſet ſail within a month.

The time was now expired. The day before he went his voyage, after he had been an hour with my miſtreſs, in ſome private converſation, he left her, and came directly into my room, with ſuch an air of benignity in his face, as ſome heavenly miniſter would wear, who brought a meſſage of peace.

He begun: "You will be ſurpriſed, Madam, to find "I know your family, and the reaſon you have put "yourſelf into the protection of mine. The firſt ſight "I had of you at the play, made an impreſſion, which "was never effaced, till I gave my vows to the beſt of "wives. It is with ſome confuſion I own the wrong I

" did your virtue, when I tell you nothing ſhould have " prevented my purſuit of the paſſion you firſt raiſed, " but the ſcandal of the houſe you was in; which was " ſo extravagant, that it forbad me ever thinking of you. " But I now do you entire juſtice, and admire that tri- " umph of honour, that put you in a ſtation ſo low, " to ſecure yourſelf from the temptation of returning to " your brother. I have left you ten thouſand pounds " in bank-bills; and have told your caſe (as I had it " from the woman that nurſed you) to my wife, who " has all the virtues that ever adorned the ſex. She " yielded to this propoſal with tranſport; and waits while " I am gone to deliver the bills." He ſaid this, and left me without time or language to ſpeak my gratitude.

My miſtreſs immediately came into the chamber, with goodneſs ſhining in her eyes, and gave me the bank-bills, with a grace, which only virtue can ſtamp on human actions. She prevented my thanks, by making an apology for her ignorance of my quality, aſſuring me, the houſe was entirely at my command; and that the hopes of my ſtaying with her, was the greateſt ſatisfaction ſhe propoſed in her dear *Henry*'s abſence. I could not poſſibly diſcover my ſenſe of this ſurpriſing benefit, by all the force of language.——My ſilence, and the tenderneſs into which ſhe ſaw my ſoul was melted, was the only evidence of gratitude I could now give.

In the morning, when every thing was ready for the parting of the *Eaſt-India* fleet, my generous benefactor came into his wife's chamber, to take his laſt adieu. I was with her, endeavouring to give that conſolation myſelf wanted. Her grief drew ſome reluctant tears from him, while he endeavoured to conceal the inward anguiſh. The hero and the lover appeared in his behaviour. And when, to excuſe the intemperance of her ſorrow, his wife urged the dangers of the ſeas, and the rage of barbarous nations on the ſhore; I ſhall never forget with what an air of greatneſs he replied; *Je crains Dieu, & je n'ai point d'autre crainte:*—" I fear God, and I have " no other fear." Thus undaunted would the godlike man have appeared, had he ſeen the ſtars falling from their orbs, and heard the ſound of the laſt thunders. When he had, with an apparent regret, freed himſelf from the

embraces

embraces of his wife, with a look of compaſſion, like that of ſome pitying angel, he bid me farewel. His domeſtics were loſt in grief; the paſſage from his houſe was crouded with his grateful dependents, whoſe wrongs or neceſſities had been redreſſed by him. A thouſand ardent prayers for his proſperity reached the ſkies, and gained the divine aſſent; while he haſted through the admiring throng, diſtreſſed with the popular applauſe.

How poor a figure is that of a libertine, in his moſt glittering heights of vanity, compared to this great man, who has ſo early begun his race of glory, and is in the very bloom of youth mature in every virtue! Inſtead of paſſing his hours in a train of idle amuſements, the gay part of his life is devoted to heaven, and the public welfare.——You know where to find

Your humble ſervant,

MELINDA.

LETTER XV.

To EUSEBIUS.

AS my reformation is partly owing to that exalted notion of virtue your example gave me, 'tis one of the greateſt ſatisfactions I have, to expreſs the ſenſe of that immenſe obligation, by unfolding the moſt ſecret receſſes of my ſoul to you.

I cannot but communicate my content, while every view my thoughts take, heightens my happineſs. I look back on the ſtormy ocean, the tumult and perplexity of my life paſt, and bleſs the gracious power that ſaved me on the very edge of perdition. When I look forward, my expectations are all bright and unbounded.

I bid my ſoul take its eaſe, baniſh every care, and act, without reſtraint, the glorious prodigal. I ſurvey my vaſt poſſeſſion, loſe my wiſhes in endleſs plenty, and give up all my powers to indolence and joy. I look to the ſtars, count the heavenly glories, and call the treaſures of eternity my own.

Let chaos come again; be the gay creation loſt in darkneſs, and the fair face of Nature become an univerſal

blank; let her beauties fade, and thoſe divine characters ſhe wears be effaced; I ſhall yet be happy. When the groves ſhall no more renew their verdure, nor the valleys boaſt their flowery pride,—when the ſun is extinguiſhed in the ſkies, and all the æthereal lamps have burnt out their golden flames,——when the commiſſioned angel ſhall lift his hand on high, and ſwear by the unutterable name——That time ſhall be no more,——when theſe tranſitory images of things for ever take their flight, I ſhall explore the worlds of life and pleaſure, and triumph in the plentitude of bliſs.

Then ſhall the celeſtial *arcana* be unveiled, and the heaven of heavens diſcloſe their glories; the ineffable Divinity ſhall ſhew the milder beauties of his face, and manifeſt as much of his excellence, as created intellects can ſupport. But what angel's wing has meaſured the height of his throne? who has entered thoſe ſacred receſſes, where he dwells in himſelf, poſſeſſed of unbounded bliſs? Has the ocean of joy been fathomed, or the limits of independent felicity deſcribed? Who has found acceſs to the inmoſt habitations of the Moſt High, and gazed on eſſential glory; before whoſe fainter emanations the angelic ſplendors are eclipſed, the thrones and principalities of light diſappear?

What path is found to thoſe ſublime retreats,
Where Pleaſure banquets in its regal ſeats,
Where Beauty triumphs in her native bow'r,
Uncopy'd yet by the creating pow'r?
Ten thouſand various forms, divinely fair,
Sparkle in their ſupreme ideas there;
While wiſdom, with ſuperior order, ſhines
In boundleſs ſchemes, and infinite deſigns:
Wondrous the proſpect, clear, and unconfin'd,
But open only to th' eternal Mind.
What tow'ring intellect, with daring flight,
Has made excurſion through theſe realms of light;
The bleſs'd receſſes, where th' approachleſs God,
From all duration, made his high abode?
Who e'er has mark'd, with bold inquiring eyes,
From whence the ſecret ſprings of life ariſe;

How

How from their deep exhauſtleſs ſource they flow,
To actuate heav'n, and cheer the world below?
Thoſe dazzling habitations who has found,
Where Love, in all his heav'nly charms, ſits crown'd?
Great Love, th' almighty Father's firſt delight,
His image, and the darling of his ſight;
The full reſemblance of the Deity,
Who all his glorious image ſtamp'd on thee;
'Twas thou who didſt his boundleſs thoughts employ,
His ſole complacence, his peculiar joy,
From ages unbegun.——But who can tell
Thy generation, and thy birth reveal?
What thought can meaſure back the long extent
Of nameleſs times, and ſpeak thy great deſcent?
Before the hills appear'd, or fountains flow'd,
Or golden flames in the blue æther glow'd;
Before the vaſt creation had a name,
Thou waſt in bliſs and dignity the ſame.
By thee the ſun, by thee the ſtars were made;
The ſpacious ſkies at thy command were ſpread;
The heav'n of heav'ns, the empyrean coaſts,
Were form'd by thee, with all their num'rous hoſts;
Angels, archangels, thrones, dominions, pow'rs,
Who ſing thy conqueſts in th' immortal bow'rs.
For thou doſt ev'ry heav'nly breaſt inflame,
And loud Victoria's *anſwer to thy name:*
Their beings and their bliſs they owe to thee,
Thou equal offspring of the Deity!
His perfect image thou doſt juſtly prove;
For all the bright Divinity is Love.

You find, in whatever character I act, whether the ſaint or the libertine, love is the animating motive, the leading principle. But how ſuperior are my proſpects! how glorious the hopes that now fire my ſoul, to the trifling ends I had lately in view! My deſires terminate in nothing below infinite excellence, and unbounded felicity. *Adieu.*

LET-

LETTER XVI.

The ſtory of OLINDA *and* SOPHRONIA.

[Tranſlated from *Taſſo's* JERUSALEM, *Book* 2.]

THE King was now with martial cares oppreſs'd,
When curs'd *Iſmenes* thus his Lord addreſs'd.
" To ſhare your fate, great Sir, I left my cell,
" And bring you all th' aſſiſting force of hell:
" Th' infernal ſpirits, ſubject to my will,
" With eager ſpeed my ſtrict commands fulfil;
" By them inform'd, this method I propoſe,
" To guard the fortreſs, and inſult your foes.
" Beneath a temple which the Chriſtians own,
" Deſcends a vault, to all but them, unknown:
" Within the awful conſecrated ground
" An image of the Virgin-Mother's found;
" Perpetual lamps before the wondrous maid
" Are lighted up, and fragrant incenſe laid.
" This ſtatue, Sir, by your own hands convey'd
" From thence, muſt be in *Macon*'s temple laid;
" Secur'd by ſpells, while that does ſafe remain,
" *Godfrey* ſhall ſtorm the fated town in vain."
This ſaid, th' impatient King directs his pace,
With impious fury, to the holy place;
Nor to profane the ſacred pavement fears,
But madly thence the beauteous image bears.
Then in his god's polluted ſeat 'twas laid,
While o'er it ev'ry charm the wizard ſaid.
But when in heav'n the next gay morning ſhone,
Its guardian finds the ſacred treaſure gone;
Searches in vain; then with a thouſand fears,
Diſtracted, to the court the tidings bears.
The Prince his Chriſtian ſubjects firſt ſuſpects,
And all his flaming rage at them directs:
But whether human hands the work had done,
Or pow'r divine, to men was yet unknown.
The curs'd inchanter mutters o'er his ſpells,
Yet nothing by the helliſh art reveals;
Each houſe was ranſack'd to its laſt retreat,
But no ſucceſs th' inrag'd inquirers met.

" 'Tis

" 'Tis then reſolv'd, (the raving Monarch cries);
" I'll doom them all one gen'ral ſacrifice;
" The guiltleſs with th' unknown offender falls;
" A fact like this for ſpeedy vengeance calls."
This cruel ſentence reach'd the Chriſtians ears.
Their ſudden fate unuſual horror wears;
No dawning hope of ſafety was in ſight,
No method of defence, or ſecret flight:
Nor dare they mercy from the tyrant crave;
Their laſt and deſp'rate refuge was the grave.
But Heav'n, which ne'er abandons the diſtreſt,
Provides them ſuccour, where they hop'd it leaſt.
A beauteous virgin liv'd, but liv'd unknown,
Amidſt the concourſe of the noiſy town;
A lively bloom adorn'd her charming face,
An artleſs ſoftneſs, and perſuaſive grace.
To this advantage fav'ring Heav'n had join'd
The richer bleſſing of a noble mind.
With pious thoughts, and ſacred zeal, inſpir'd,
From all the world ſhe would have liv'd retir'd;
But envious Love the chaſte deſign forbid,
Nor ſuffer'd ſo much merit to be hid;
A youthful vot'ry to her guiltleſs eyes,
His fatal pow'r had doom'd a ſacrifice:
One creed, one holy faith they both confeſs'd,
In one pure form were both their pray'rs addreſs'd;
The youth as modeſt as his miſtreſs fair,
With awful ſilence ſtill conceal'd his care;
And ſtill the lovely author of his pains
A ſtranger to his am'rous grief remains;
His cares and ſervices were all unpaid,
Nor once regarded by the wary maid.
The Chriſtians danger now had reach'd her ears,
And fill'd her with a thouſand growing fears.
At laſt, ſome gen'rous ſtratagem ſhe ſought,
How, by her own, their ſafety might be bought.
But ſhame, and female fear, th' attempt reſtrain,
And render all her great intentions vain;
Till bolder hope her firſt deſign renews,
Which bravely now the ſtedfaſt maid purſues.
She paſs'd the crouded ſtreets with ſober pace,
Nor ſtrove to veil, nor yet expoſe her face;

Downward

Downward her eyes with modeſt looks incline,
And with a nice engaging coyneſs ſhine;
Her charming air, her eaſy mien, and dreſs,
Nor art, nor perfect negligence confeſs:
Admir'd of all the thoughtful beauty paſt,
And met the wild diſorder'd King at laſt.
" Great Sir, (ſhe then began), the Chriſtians ſpare,
" And I th' unknown offender will declare."
A decent boldneſs lighten'd in her eyes,
Whoſe piercing luſtre ev'ry heart ſurpriſe:
The vanquiſh'd Monarch ſtood confus'd and charm'd,
His viſage alter'd, and his rage diſarm'd:
Ev'n love had enter'd, but th' imperious fair
Attack'd his ſoul by methods too ſevere;
Not frowns, nor coy forbidding beauty move,
But gentle ſmiles indulge the flame of love:
Yet, if not love, amazement and delight,
Her charms within his doubtful breaſt excite.
He paus'd, and thus—" Let me the ſecret ſhare,
" The people's lives, at thy requeſt, I'll ſpare."
" From firſt to laſt (ſhe cries) the bold deſign,
" The great attempt and daring action's mine."
And thus, by an heroical deceit,
Her life abandon'd for the public fate.
Again inquir'd the yet ſuſpending King,
" Who was thy curs'd adviſer in the thing?"
Th' undaunted maid replies, " The whole deſign,
" Contriv'd, reſolv'd, and executed, 's mine;
" The danger, the fatigue, was mine alone;
" The guilt and glory ſhall be all my own."
Inrag'd, the tyrant then replies,—" And all
" My vengeance on thy wretched head ſhall fall."
" 'Tis juſt, (ſhe calmly ſaid), and I'm content;
" The illuſtrious action mine, mine be the puniſhment.
" But, Sir, your anxious ſearches are in vain
" The violated image to regain;
" For nothing but its aſhes now remain;
" This way ſecur'd, that by no Pagan hand
" The holy ſhrine might be again profan'd.
" Demand no more, my Lord; enough is known;
" The action I both juſtify and own."

Her

Her daring language, and relentleſs air,
No more the wild outrageous King could bear;
No more his ſwelling fury could reſtrain;
Her youth, her pow'rful beauty, plead in vain;
Nor interceding love his rigour tames:
The pity'd virgin ſentenc'd to the flames,
Whom thence (yet with compaſſion and remorſe)
The murm'ring Pagans in a tumult force.
Her hands are bound, her modeſt face unveil'd,
No more its charms from vulgar eyes conceal'd.
Though void of fear, her doubtful looks confeſs
A ſoft concern, and human tenderneſs:
The roſy bluſh, that from her viſage flies,
Not paleneſs, but a ſnowy white ſupplies.
Mean time the wondrous accident was known
From ſtreet to ſtreet, thro' all the ſwarming town.
The perſon doubtful, the relation true,
Among the reſt, *Olinda* thither drew:
Too ſoon the wretched youth approach'd, and found,
By impious hands, his charming miſtreſs bound;
Diſtracted now among the guards he preſs'd,
And thus aloud th' aſtoniſh'd King addreſs'd.
" Ah! Royal Sir, yourſelf no more deceive,
" Nor this fond maid's invented tale believe.
" Could ſhe, alas! the cautious watch betray,
" And from its ſeat the weighty ſhrine convey?
" 'Tis fiction all;—the enterpriſe was mine,
" Nor will I thus a glorious fate reſign."
He adds, " Your temple, down a ſloping way,
" Receives the light, and draws the beamy day;
" Through that I ſtole the ſacred prize away.
" My Lord, the ſentenc'd criminal you ſee;
" Theſe chains, this cruel death, belongs to me."
" And could not then a ſingle life ſuffice,
" Unhappy youth? (the fair *Sophronia* cries,
" With kindling love and pity in her eyes).
" What rage, what fury mov'd thee, to expoſe
" Thyſelf a victim to relentleſs foes?
" What tears, what mean reluctance, have I ſhown,
" That you believe I cannot die alone?"
But nothing could her kind repulſes gain;
Unſhaken, ſtill his firſt deſigns remain:

With

With ſtedfaſt courage each deſpiſes life,
And long between them held the gen'rous ſtrife;
Virtue, and mighty love, diſpute the field,
And neither in the friendly conteſt yield.
The tyrant raves, nor longer now refrains,
But both one cruel puniſhment ordains:
Commiſſion'd, ſoon the charming youth they bind
With heavy chains, and to the ſtake confin'd.
" Are theſe (he cries) the fetters love prepares?
" This the reward of all my tender cares?
" With ſofter thoughts I fed my fond deſires,
" And hop'd to meet thee in more gentle fires.
" Yet could I, falling in thy tender arms,
" Expire, my death had ſtill a thouſand charms;
" Could I receive thy parting ſighs, and join,
" At the laſt fatal gaſp, my lips with thine;
" Our ſouls united, then, to heav'n ſhould fly,
" And I content, my charming fair, ſhould die."
" Far other cares (ſhe mildly ſaid) than theſe,
" *Olinda*, ſhould our ſerious minds poſſeſs.
" Lament thy ſins, contemplate the reward
" For faith, and humble penitence, prepar'd:
" The palm, the ſtarry crown, and martyr's due,
" With all the boundleſs raptures that enſue:
" Survey the ſun, ſurvey the dazzling ſky;
" To thoſe bleſs'd regions we muſt ſhortly fly."
Of gods and men the Pagans murmur'd loud,
The Chriſtians, ſilent, weep among the croud.
The King, nor could his pity be diſguis'd,
A ſtrange unuſual tenderneſs ſurpris'd;
He durſt no more the moving object view;
But fix'd, and ſcorning to relent, withdrew:
Sophronia, unconcern'd, alone appears,
Nor in the univerſal ſorrow ſhares.
The mournful officers had plac'd, the while,
And now were lighting up, the ſmoaky pile;
When a young champion, with a martial grace,
And lofty mien, approach'd the fatal place;
A tygreſs on her plumy helmet ſhone,
Which, for the fair *Clarinda*, made her known:
Her ſex's nicer ornaments ſhe fled,
In toilſome arms, to great atchievements bred:

Her

Her hands the labour of the loom refuſe,
Nor in a cloſet could her mind amuſe;
But o'er the fields, in ſavage ſpoils array'd,
Or thro' the woods, with fearleſs thoughts ſhe ſtray'd.
When yet a child, the fiery ſteed ſhe rein'd,
Challeng'd the race, or wreſtled on the ſand;
Vaſt deſarts, hills, and pathleſs wilds ſhe trac'd,
When with her ſpear the foaming boar ſhe chas'd.
From *Perſia* now the blooming warrior came,
To win new trophies of immortal fame;
In battles paſt her ſword had oft compell'd
The ſcatter'd *Gauls* to quit the bloody field:
Majeſtic charms, which ev'ry heart ſurpriſe,
And awful glories ſparkle in her eyes.
Arriving here, prepar'd for death ſhe found
The tender youth and lovely virgin bound.
The feeble ſex to heav'n her eyes addreſs'd,
And in her looks a ſilent calm expreſs'd;
The other grieves, and melts in pitying tears,
Not for his own unhappy fate, but her's.
The warlike nymph for both compaſſion proves,
But moſt her care the ſilent ſuff'rer moves.
She to the people turns, nor loſes time,
Demands with haſte, and hears in brief their crime:
Intreats the execution they'd delay,
And helps herſelf the riſing flames to ſtay;
Then charg'd,—"Let none this office undertake,
"Till from the King I ſend them orders back."
Her bold commands the willing croud obey:
She, to the court directed, ſpeeds away;
And audience gain'd, begins,—"Great Prince, from far
"Th' unknown *Clarinda* comes, with you to ſhare
"The toils and hazards of the hoſtile field;
"A voluntier to your commands I yield,
"Whether to meet the battle on the plain,
"Or at the walls the breaches to maintain."
The King replies, "Who has not heard thy fame?
"What diſtant climes are ſtrangers to thy name?
"Thy deeds, illuſtrious virgin, ſpread thy praiſe,
"Where-e'er the wand'ring ſun reveals his rays.
"Aſſiſted thus, we *Godfrey*'s arms defy,
"By thee ſecur'd of certain victory;

" To thy command our forces we reſign ;
" The war and all its glorious conduct's thine."
Her modeſt thanks the graceful maid expreſs'd,
And thus again her gen'rous ſuit addreſs'd.
" Unuſual 'tis, I know, my Lord, and hard,
" For ſervice unperform'd to aſk reward ;
" But, by your Royal clemency, aſſur'd,
" I boldly beg, of quick ſucceſs ſecur'd.
" Reverſe, great Sir, the ſentenc'd lovers doom ;
" An act like this your bounty will become."
" Nothing was e'er (the vanquiſh'd King reply'd)
" To ſuch a fair petitioner deny'd :
" Their lives, heroic maid, your purchaſe be ;
" Guilty, or innocent, I ſet them free."

LETTER XVII.

From BELLAMOUR, *relating the ſequel of his paſſion for* ALMEDA, *in the 8th letter of the firſt part of* Letters Moral and Entertaining.

My dear CARLOS,

I Am pleaſed to find, that neither the gaiety of your humour, nor your own ſucceſsful amours, have made you inſenſible to the misfortunes of your friend. Your compaſſion is ſome relief; for I am really paſt jeſting; and raillery, in this caſe, would have been inhumane.

You may remember, in my laſt letter, I had ſome hopes the diſcovery of my inclinations for *Almeda* would prevail with *Elvira* to free me from the engagement I made to my father to marry her. But I was diſappointed. All the art and eloquence I employed, to paint the height of my paſſion for her rival, had juſt the contrary effect. Inſtead of raiſing her anger and reſentment, it melted her into a tenderneſs, of which I had never thought her capable. At laſt ſhe told me, though ſhe would not ſuffer her tongue ſo far to belye the ſentiments of her heart as to refuſe me, yet I might refuſe to marry her, if I knew how to diſpenſe with my obligations to a dying father.

The naming my father gave a pious emotion to my ſoul,

ſoul, and awakened all the filial gratitude and veneration due to his memory. I am no libertine. Virtue and vice are with me real diſtinctions. I dare not violate my word to the meaneſt of my dependents, nor even to my worſt enemy. Honour and conſcience have hitherto governed my ſecret actions. I felt the force of *Elvira*'s words, and left her without making any reply.

But how am I imbarraſſed! If I had never ſeen the charming *Almeda*, I muſt have been unhappy. *Elvira* has been, from her infancy, bred up with my ſiſters. My affection for her has been always the ſame as for them; and ſeems the tie of nature, not of choice. In all the little freedoms of converſation I have treated her with the ſame decency as if ſhe ſtood in that relation. Deſtiny ſeemed to have ſet ſome ſacred bounds between us, that it would have been criminal to violate. This ſentiment is ſo habitual to my thoughts, that I could as ſoon commit inceſt, and break in on all the ſanctity of Nature's laws, as fall in love with *Elvira*. She is handſome enough; ſo are my ſiſters. I love her, as I do them, with a very pure and innocent affection. Her charms have never kindled one ſoft deſire in my breaſt: rather a religious horror would ſeize me in addreſſing her. She is as ſecure from my attempts, as if an angel ſtood viſibly before me to guard her virtue.

In this ſituation, imagine, if you can, how miſerable I muſt be with this legacy of a wife. She brings a vaſt fortune, you will tell me: but, my dear *Carlos*, could ſhe bring me both the *Indies*, it could be no relief to my domeſtic chagrin. I am no rake. Nor could you propoſe any faſhionable liberty but what would heighten my uneaſineſs. Yet I dare not reflect on my father. It was not avarice that governed him, but rather compaſſion for a young orphan committed to his care. However I ſuffer, be his memory unblemiſhed, and the ſacred remains undiſturbed by my complaints.

But the criſis of my miſery is yet untold. *Almeda* is fixed to her cruel reſolution of ſeeing me no more. To what cave, what deſart, what unfrequented place ſhe is retired, I cannot find: but ſhe is certainly eloped from mortal men, and eſcapes all my inquiries. However,

ſhe has favoured me with the incloſed letter ſince her retreat; which I have ſent, to juſtify the height of my paſſion; by which you'll ſee the beauty of her mind is equal to that of her charming perſon. I am,

SIR,

Your's, &c.

BELLAMOUR.

To BELLAMOUR.

" I Had not the leaſt intention ever to write to you " more, or put you in mind there was ſuch a perſon " in the world as *Almeda*, had not your diſtreſſes reached " me. And your endeavours to find me out, obliged " me to aſſure you the ſearch is in vain. I am deter- " mined never to ſee you more. And this ſhall be the " laſt letter you will ever receive from me; which I " write purely for your conſolation, if an account of " my quiet will be any to you.

" From the moment you told me my happineſs de- " pended on *Elvira*'s refuſing you, I diſmiſſed every " flattering hope. I was ſenſible ſhe knew too well " how to diſtinguiſh merit, and how rarely ſuch excel- " lency as your's is to be met with. To reſign you to " the poſſeſſion of another, to conquer the warmeſt " wiſhes, and find happineſs in giving pleaſure to thoſe " we love, abſtracted from ourſelves, is a refinement " few people are capable of, and what I did not expect " from *Elvira*. She is conſcious of her own ſuperior " charms, and may reaſonably hope to gain your heart; " whilſt her eſteem for you would not ſuffer her to let " you diſpoſe of your's to a perſon, who, in the common " views of mankind, is unworthy of you.

" Oh! why did Fate throw you in my way? Was " it only to awaken me from my ſtupid negligence of " the world to a ſenſe of ſorrow? to ſhew me a glimpſe " of happineſs, only to make me more ſenſible of my " indigence? Had your part in life been to act the de- " pendent, and mine the advanced ſtation, you had been " left to me in quiet; no body would have diſputed my " right:

" right: and I ſhould have found more, much more
" pleaſure in rewarding ſuch merit, than I ſhould have
" done now in ſharing your fortune. But why do I
" expoſtulate with Heaven, who, no doubt, allotted me
" into this ſphere of life as moſt ſuitable for me? It is
" in our own power to make the incidents of human
" life good or evil. It is our own minds that conſti-
" tute them either. The reception they meet with there,
" and the turn they take, gives them their proper tinc-
" ture. Let us not diſturb the wiſe œconomy, but ſub-
" mit to the methods of Providence. You have obey-
" ed your father in the diſpoſal of your perſon to *Elvi-*
" *ra:* let her have your mind alſo. It is her right. I
" will confeſs it is. There only I could envy her hap-
" pineſs; and it is there her delicacy could never en-
" dure a rival. Let us not be juſt by halves May
" the ſame generous ſpirit that carried you through the
" firſt marks of your obedience, animate you through
" all the offices of the moſt exalted virtue. I leave you,
" that I may be no obſtacle to it; and beg you to con-
" ſider, whatever faults you commit to *Elvira*, I am the
" occaſion: and while I fly from all commerce with
" you, to preſerve my innocence, you will fruſtrate my
" endeavours, and make me guilty.

" There is a pleaſure in our very ſorrows, when they
" flow for a worthy object. You can give me that
" pleaſure, and juſtify me to myſelf; and by thoſe very
" virtues that tear you from me, bind me faſter to you,
" and give me a vanity in you. Your happineſs will
" be mine. I will not tell you, that I can forget you.
" It is impoſſible. The roſes muſt forget to bloom,
" the birds to warble from the beach, the gay creati-
" on be undreſſed, and I inſenſible to perfection, ere
" your image can be eraſed out of my heart, or it
" can receive any other impreſſion. A heart that has
" been your prize, cannot deſcend to a meaner ſacrifice.
" No; the paſſion you have inſpired, ſuits the grandeur
" of your exalted genius, and muſt have the ſame dura-
" tion with your virtue. I retire from the world, not
" to avoid, but to enjoy you more at liberty. We are
" never abſent from thoſe we love. Every beauty that
" nature can produce, brings you to my thoughts, ſince

" you have pointed out all their various charms to me, " taught me how to reliſh ſolitude, and directed my " mind to entertainments above the reach of fortune.

" That ſentiment of tenderneſs I have for you, has " ſome emanation of divinity upon it, while it natu- " rally leads me to the contemplation of the Supreme " Excellence, and directs my devotions to the fountain " of beauty. Thoſe hopes and fears which alternately " elevate or depreſs the mind in all human expectations, " vaniſh. The ſoul is at liberty to purſue the intereſt " of another life; raiſes its thoughts above this little " ſcene of things, to fairer, future worlds; breaks off the " fetters that chain it to this world, and ſmiles through " her priſon, with a holy impatience on the joys of im- " mortality. There all human diſtinctions will be loſt, " and gold will have nothing to do in the ſettling of " them.

" Perhaps the gay world will pity me, and think re- " ligion, and a cell, but a melancholy recourſe: but I " ſhall not find it ſo, while I am not ſecluded from the " generous *Monimia*'s chearing eye. Her delicate and " blameleſs ſenſibility of human paſſions (ſhe to whom " ſuffering is a merit) ſoftens every care, and raiſes " every joy. While ſhe deſcends from the height of " grandeur to the gentle offices of the ſincere friend, " ſhe forgets every advantage of fortune, till virtue in " diſtreſs calls for her aid. Her titles have no energy " with her, but when they give her a privilege of doing " good; and then ſhe exerts them to their full force. " She feels they cannot buy freedom to the mind, and " that no calamity will retire in reſpect to them. Fate " has ſo ordered it, that there is ſome ſimilitude in our " deſtinies, which reconciles me to mine; while ſhe re- " commends piety and reſignation with the ſtrongeſt and " moſt beautiful arguments, her own example; and " fortifies my mind, by putting every virtue, by her " own practice, in the moſt amiable light. Sometimes " ſhe ſings a *Requiem* to our ſorrows, ſooths them to " peace with the moſt harmonious numbers; and I have " the eaſe of ſeeing my thoughts expreſſed in her's with " every elegance: and, when the ſerious ſoul exerts it- " ſelf, ſhe anticipates heaven, and gives a ſweet foretaſte

" of

" of the ſongs of angels. Thus we baffle diſappoint-
" ment, and elude our ſufferings. Honours, Wealth,
" and Beauty, ſtand abaſhed to ſee themſelves deſpiſed;
" while Devotion claps her wings at this her faireſt
" triumph.

" You will, I hope, from what I have ſaid, be ſatiſ-
" fied I am not unhappy: and take this laſt aſſurance
" from me, that I can never be ſo whilſt you are bleſſ-
" ed. You have annihilated every ſenſe of ſorrow in
" me. I have no tears but when you claim them.

Adieu."

LETTER XVIII.

To Lady MARY, *from her ſiſter juſt before her death.*

I Come, ye ghoſts; prepare your roſeate bow'rs,
Celeſtial palms, and ever-blooming flow'rs.
Thither, where ſinners may have reſt, I go,
Where flames refin'd, in breaſts ſeraphic, glow.

Pope.

This, my dear ſiſter, is my long, my final adieu, till we meet in happier regions. The ſprings of life are running low; and nature, tired with human changes, longs to be at reſt. The grave attends me, that manſion of ſilence and repoſe.

I ſoon ſhall cloſe my weary eyes in peace,
And ſtretch compos'd, upon my duſty bed.
Oh Death! thy quiet and refreſhing ſhade
Shall yield a long, an unmoleſted reſt,
From all the fruitleſs toil and vanity
That dwells below the ſun———

I have had an ill ſtate of health for ſome years, and have lately had two fits of an apoplexy. The third my phyſician is ſo ſincere to let me know will be fatal. I am now indiſpoſed, and find ſome certain ſymptoms of its return; which makes me reſolve to unburden my ſoul of its laſt preſſure.

Forgive me, ye injured ſhades of my great anceſtors, nor blot my name from your illuſtrious line!—My dear ſiſter,

ſiſter, can your rigid virtue forgive my fault, and plead my defence to my injured huſband, when I am ſilent in the duſt? Dear Lady *Mary*, will you not pardon a crime which is blotted out by Heaven? With that my peace is made by a long courſe of temperance. Weeks, and months, and years, are paſt ſince the date of my guilt. The riſing and the ſetting ſun has been a conſtant witneſs to my devotions; the moon and midnight-ſtars were conſtant to my tears.

It is, as you know, ſixteen years ſince I was married to Count *Edgar*. I have had two ſons and three daughters. But ſhall I own this ſhameful truth? The eldeſt of the two brothers is not his. On a fatal night (let the horror of darkneſs cover it) I was, in my huſband's abſence, by the Marquis *de* ———, ſeduced. It was not the contrivance of a formal amour, but the effect of inadvertency and ſurpriſe. Oh! where was my guardian angel in that looſe moment, that interval of reproach and madneſs!

The ſubject is too infamous for me to enter into particulars. But I have full aſſurance this youth is not the Count's ſon; though his confidence in me, with his eaſy temper, kept him from ever making the leaſt inquiry into any circumſtance of my guilt. He has lately made his will; and to the eldeſt brother (being his greateſt favourite) given his whole eſtate, leaving the reſt entirely dependent on this ſon, which, to my confuſion, is not his own.

This ſecret, dear Lady *Mary*, I muſt intreat you to diſcover to Count *Edgar* after my death, that he may do his own children juſtice, and only provide moderately for the other. Aſſure him, that it was only in this inſtance I ever wronged my fidelity to him. This is the utmoſt reparation I can make; and, with a mind unburdened, I now caſt myſelf on infinite mercy, and ſmile in the view of death.

I come, ye miniſters of fate, I come;
But while I paſs the interveening gloom,
Should riſing doubts my trembling heart invade,
With muſic cheer the melancholy ſhade.

In

In ſoothing ſtrains a gentle Requiem *ſing,*
And touch, with heav'nly art, the golden ſtring.
The charming ſound ſhall ev'ry care beguile,
And make the ſeats of deſolation ſmile.
My ſoul, prepar'd by ſacred ecſtaſy,
Shall learn, and join the chorus of the ſky.

Once more, my dear ſiſter, adieu! Let my crime warn you never to be vain or ſecure. From the height of ſelf-confidence and arrogant virtue, I was left to make this reproachful ſtep to humble me. My repentance has been deep and ſincere; and, through the divine redemption, my pardon is procured, and my guilt for ever obliterated.

Your dying friend,

HERMIONE.

LETTER XIX.

A letter from ARISTUS, *giving his friend a relation of the ſudden death of his new bride, who was ſeized in the chapel while the ſacred rites were performing.*

MY fate will furniſh you with a full evidence of the vanity of human happineſs. My laſt letter was writ in the height of ſucceſs, with the moſt arrogant expectations and boaſt of a laſting felicity; now it is all changed, the ſhadows of night cover me.

The lovely *Erminia*, whom I had ſo long purſued, and at laſt perſuaded to crown my wiſhes, the very morning ſhe gave me her hand, before the ſacred ceremony was finiſhed, was ſurpriſed with the fatal meſſage of death; and carried in a ſwoon from the chapel to her chamber, where ſhe ſoon expired in her mother's arms. This hour ſhe appeared with all the coſt and ſplendor of a youthful bride; the next ſhe is a pale and ſenſeleſs corpſe, muffled in a ghaſtly ſhroud. Thoſe charms that in the morning promiſed an eternal bloom, before the evening have dropped their ſmiling pride; the ſparkling eyes are ſunk in darkneſs; the ſoft, the tuneful voice, is for ever ſilent; while a livid hue ſits on the late roſy lips.

Thus

Thus airy pleaſure dances in our eyes,
And ſpreads falſe images in fair diſguiſe,
T'allure our ſouls; till juſt within our arms
The viſion dies, and all the painted charms
Flee quick away from the purſuing ſight,
Till they are loſt in ſhades, and mingle with the night.

Oh Death! how cruel was thy triumph! Youth and beauty, joy and blooming hope lie here a victim to thy rage. The darkſome priſon of the grave muſt now confine thy gentle captive; inſtead of the pomp of a bridal bed, the cold earth muſt be her lodging, duſt and corruption her covering.

You will now expect I ſhould practiſe the principles I have ſo often aſſerted, in exerciſing my boaſted reaſon and moderation; or leave you to inſult me with the arguments I lately produced to allay your grief, under the preſſure of an uncommon misfortune. This reproach would be but juſt, at a period when Heaven has given me a full evidence of the truths I confeſſed, and ſet the vanity of human hopes in the cleareſt demonſtration before me. One would think I ſhould now, if ever, find it eaſy to moralize on theſe ſubjects, and act the philoſopher from mere neceſſity, if not from virtue.

Were the caſe your's, or any body's but my own, how many wiſe things ſhould I repeat! how fluently could I talk! ſo much more eaſy is it to dictate than to practiſe. And yet I am reaſonable by intervals. I am in more than name a Chriſtian. In ſome bright periods, I feel the force of that profeſſion, and pay homage to its ſacred rules. A heavenly ray ſcatters my grief, and cheers my ſoul with divine conſolations. The gay and the gloomy appearances of mortal things vaniſh before the gleams of celeſtial light. Immortal pleaſures, with gentle invitations, call me to the ſkies, and all my thoughts aſcend.

But how ſhort my triumph! how eaſy the tranſition from reaſon to madneſs! Of what ſurpriſing variety is a human mind capable? Light and darkneſs, heaven and hell ſeem blended within; it is all chaos, and wild diſorder. The reaſon which one moment relieves me, the next ſeems with a juſt train of ideas to torment me.

See there, all pale and dead, ſhe lies;
For ever flow my ſtreaming eyes:
Fly, Hymen, *with extinguiſh'd fires;*
Fly, nuptial-bliſs, and chaſte deſires:
Erminia's *fled, the loveli'ſt mind,*
Faith, ſweetneſs, wit, together join'd.
Dwelt faith, and wit, and ſweetneſs there?
Oh! view the change, and drop a tear.

Adieu.

LETTER XX.

To LYCIDAS.

My dear LYCIDAS,

THere are ſeaſons when the mind dilates itſelf, and, ſenſible of its own grandeur, breaks through the limits of this lower creation, in ſearch of ſome unknown, and yet untaſted pleaſures. This is my preſent diſpoſition. The wide limits of the ſky have nothing to entertain me: Nature ſeems to be exhauſted and indigent. Should ſhe uncover her golden mines, or diſcloſe the ruby ſparkling in its bed; let her open the veins of ſapphire, and ſhew the diamond glittering on its native rock,—— I have no avarice of this kind. The orient clouds that now adorn the morning-ſky, could I reach them, would be a more ſubſtantial treaſure. Appear, ye faireſt blandiſhments of ſenſe; though lovely as the daughters of *Eden*, your allurements would now be loſt.——Let ſenſuality appear in all her charms, the *Perſian* delicacy, and the *Roman* pride;—let the pageantry of ſtate, the triumphs loſt in long oblivion, put on airy forms, and paſs in their viſionary ſplendor before me; in my preſent ſituation, methinks I could deſpiſe them all. Theſe ſcenes would be but tireſome repetitions; for they are no novelties to my active imagination. *Cleopatra*'s expenſive vanity, and *Pompey*'s glory, are familiar themes to my luxuriant fancy: their deſcriptions rather tire, than delight me. Even the magnificence of the ſtarry arch, the ſplendid ſtructure of the univerſe, I now ſurvey with indolence: I grow impatient to ſee a new and brighter

brighter ſcene appear; when theſe old heavens, and antiquated earth, ſhall put off their periſhable forms, and ſtand dreſſed in immortal beauty, and undecaying excellence. Bleſſed period! why art thou ſo long delayed? Oh ſtretch thy ſhining wings, and come away! Mend thy pace, old lazy Time, and ſhake thy ſlow-paced ſands! Make ſhorter circles, ye rolling planets! Thou lingering ſun, how long wilt thou travel the celeſtial road! when ſhall thy radiant walk be finiſhed! When will the great Angel arreſt thee in thy progreſs, and ſwear by him that made heaven and earth, the ſea, and all that is therein, that *Time ſhall be no more!*

My impatient ſoul ſprings forwards to ſalute the happy period, and anticipates the promiſed joy.

Great nature, then, thro' all her diff'rent works,
Shall be transform'd; the earth, and thoſe gay ſkies,
Shall be no more the ſame; a brighter ſcene
Succeeds; and paradiſe, in all its charms,
Shall be renew'd: but far its bliſs improv'd,
Fitted for minds, to whom the mighty Maker
Shall give the glorious viſion of his face
Unveil'd, and ſmiling with eternal love.
Here let me dwell, nor turn one careleſs look
On yonder hated world;——here let me drink
Full draughts of bliſs, and bathe in endleſs floods
Of life and joy;——here let me ſtill converſe.
It cannot be!——Mortality returns!
Ye radiant ſkies, adieu!——Ye ſtarry worlds,
I muſt fulfil my day, and wait the hour
That brings eternal liberty and reſt.

My native element prevails, and I muſt return to my original earth again. But I believe you are not overjoyed at this event; you could have reſigned me to the ſkies in your preſent diſpoſition: an earthly amour ſeems to ingroſs your affection; and I ſhould much more have obliged you by a diſcourſe of mortal charms, than of celeſtial attachments. But you muſt excuſe me; my mind is in a poſition too ſublime and delicate for theſe terrene nymphs: as fair as your miſtreſs is, you have no rival in me; at this inſtant I am all for the immortals.

Ob

Oh ye fair objects, ye untainted ſprings,
Of ev'ry excellence that charms the ſenſe!
Ye native beauties, ye primæval ſweets,
That bloſſom in the ſkies; but for the hopes
Of thoſe pure entertainments after death,
My ſoul would joyfully give up its claim
To an immortal ſtate: for what is life,
Reaſon, and theſe capacities of bliſs,
If loſt on toys! No; I have nobler aims,
Deſires unbounded by theſe narrow ſkies,
Theſe gaudy, flying, tranſitory ſcenes;
Eternal glories, and inchanting beauties!

Next time I ſee you, on condition you will let me laugh, you ſhall talk of loves and graces, lilies and roſes, flames and darts, till *Chanticleer* gives his laſt ſummons to the phantoms and fairies to diſappear.

CLERIMONT.

LETTER XXI.

To the Earl of———.

My LORD,

I Am juſt recovered of the wound I received in the duel, which you with ſo much reaſon and humanity endeavoured to prevent. I think myſelf now under an obligation to own the juſtice and force of your Lordſhip's arguments, and to retract whatever I ſaid in defence of ſuch an inhumane practice. It was frenzy that made me reject the advice of one who had ſo true a notion of honour, and whoſe courage had been ſo glorioufly employed in the cauſe of liberty, and the Proteſtant ſucceſſion.

You told me what the event of this mad adventure would be; that inſtead of defending, I ſhould expoſe my ſiſter's innocence to the public cenſure. It is too late for me to wiſh I had been guided by your generous and friendly admonitions; which for the future will wear the ſtamp of infallibility on them. Nor can I propoſe to myſelf a nobler example than your Lordſhip's in every part of human life. The generous friend, the tender huſband,

and affectionate parent, appear in their proper luſtre.—Virtue, with a ſuperior excellence, ſhines in your character, and inforces her precepts with reſiſtleſs eloquence.

The review of your conduct is a ſevere reproach to my own. I ſhall never reflect on my late ridiculous exploit without confuſion. Whatever bravery I affected, I was conſcious of the moſt ſlaviſh fears, in the midſt of my inſolent flights of vanity. Deliberate guilt hung heavy on my ſoul. I ſpent the night before the bloody aſſignation, in anguiſh which no words can expreſs; infernal viſions haunted my imagination; the caverns of night, the joyleſs abodes, diſcloſed their terrors to my diſtracted fancy.

But ſo entirely was I governed by the maxims of the licentious part of the world, that with great gallantry I challenged my own ruin, and bid defiance to death and damnation; expoſing myſelf to all the horrors, dreadful to reaſon and nature, to avoid the imputation of cowardice.

So tyrannical a thing is cuſtom, that it is neceſſary to aſk the world forgiveneſs, for preſuming to be reaſonable creatures. People are often compelled to be mad in their own defence, and to act againſt their reaſon to avoid being ſingular. It is hard indeed, that the caprice of mankind ſhould expect an apology from the few that are wiſer than the reſt, for being awake, and in their right ſenſes; that they ſhould be forced to excuſe themſelves, for keeping their eyes open, and having penetration enough to foreſee a diſtant danger, and ſo much diſcretion as to avoid it.

A man reſolved to leap from a precipice, might with a better aſſurance ridicule his companions for not promiſing to follow him; and more juſtly reproach them with cowardice, for refuſing to break their necks, than theſe men of honour can upbraid a perſon for not complying with their rules of valour, at the expence of his life, and all his hopes of future happineſs. If my generous adverſary had not ſpared my life, when it lay at his mercy, (while my ſalvation depended upon that important moment), inſtead of giving you this penitent relation,

I

I had been now curſing my own folly, under the weight of eternal infamy.

Your Lordſhip's, &c.

ANTONIO.

LETTER XXII.

To VALERIUS, *from an* Engliſh *merchant; giving an account of the adventures of his voyage.*

I Am at laſt ſafely arrived in *Holland*, and have taken the firſt opportunity to give you a relation of the adventures that detained me ſo long in foreign countries.

In my return from the *Indies*, I had ſome affairs with a *Spaniſh* merchant; which while I was managing in one of their ſea-ports, there came in a *Spaniſh* corſair, who had taken a rich *Turkiſh* prize, with ſeveral *Turks* and *Moors* priſoners, whom he offered to ſale as ſlaves. I never had any traffic of this kind, from any view of intereſt; but, from a motive of compaſſion, I had purchaſed liberty for many a miſerable wretch, to whom I gave freedom the moment I paid his ranſom.

Among the captives newly taken, there was one diſtinguiſhed by the richneſs of his habit, and more by the gracefulneſs of his port. He drew all my attention; of which he appeared ſenſible, and ſtill directed his looks to me: our ſouls ſeemed to greet one another, as if their intimacy had been of a long ſtanding, and commenced in ſome pre-exiſtent period. There was ſomething in the air of this young ſtranger, ſuperior to adverſity, and yet ſenſible of the preſent diſadvantage of his fate; while I felt for him an emotion, ſoft as the ties of nature, and could not but impute it to the ſecret impreſſion of ſome intelligent power, which was leading me to a height of generoſity beyond my own intention, and, by an impulſe of virtue on my ſoul, directing it to the accompliſhment of ſome diſtant and unknown deſign of Providence. The heavenly inſtigation came with a prevailing force, and I could not but obey its dictates.

The price ſet on this captive was extravagantly high, and ſuch as would be a vaſt diſadvantage to my preſent

affairs, to part with. However, I liſtened to the gentle monitor within, and paid the corſair his full demands.

As ſoon as I had conducted the youth to my lodgings, I told him he was from that moment free; the price I had paid, was for his friendſhip and liberty.

"Then you have confined me (replied the gentle "ſtranger) by the moſt laſting engagements. I might "have broke through any other reſtraint; but I am "now your voluntary ſlave, and dare truſt you with a "ſecret yet unknown to the *Spaniards*. My name is "*Orramel*, the only ſon of a wealthy *Baſſa* in *Conſtan-* "*tinople*; and you may demand what you will for my "ranſom."

"You will ſoon be convinced (ſaid I) there was no "mercenary intention in this action. The amity I "have for you is noble and diſintereſted: it was kin- "dled by a celeſtial ſpark, an emanation from the di- "vine clemency, and terminates in nothing below "your immortal happineſs. And were you inclined "to examine thoſe ſacred truths which would lead you "to that felicity, and to ſhare my fortune in a free and "happy nation, the wealth of the *Indies* ſhould not buy "you from my affections: but if it is your choice to "return to the cuſtoms and religion of your country, "you are abſolutely free, without attending any terms "for your releaſe."

With a friendly, but dejected look, he told me, it was impoſſible for him to diſpenſe with his filial obligations to an indulgent parent; but he poſitively refuſed his freedom, till he had given intelligence, and received an anſwer from his father: which he ſoon had, with a *carte blanche* to me, on which I might make my own demands for his ſon's ranſom. I returned it, with no other terms, but the liberty of all the Chriſtian ſlaves he had in his poſſeſſion; hoping, by this diſintereſted conduct, to leave a conviction on the mind of my young friend in favour of Chriſtianity. He could perſuade me to receive nothing but ſome little preſent, and left me with an apparent concern.

It was ſome months after he was gone, before I could finiſh my negotiations in *Spain*; but, as ſoon as they were diſpatched, I imbarked for *Holland*. We had not been

been a week at ſea, before the ſhip was taken by a *Turkiſh* pirate, and all the men in it carried to *Conſtantinople*, to be ſold as ſlaves. My lot fell to a maſter from whom I was like to find moſt barbarous treatment: however, I was reſolved to endure my bondage, till I could give intelligence to my friends in *England*, to procure my ranſom. I was fixed to this, that no hardſhip ſhould reduce me to give *Orramel* an account of my diſtreſs, till I was again in circumſtances, not to need his kindneſs, nor expect a retaliation of my own.

But Heaven had kinder intentions by bringing me into this adverſity, nor left me long without redreſs. As I was talking, in a public place, to one of my fellow-ſlaves, *Orramel* came by. He paſſed beyond me; but inſtantly returning, looked on me with great attention, till ſome melting ſorrow dropped from his eyes: when, making inquiry of ſome that were near, to whom I belonged, and being informed; without ſpeaking a word to me, he flew to my new maſter, paid his demand for my ranſom, and immediately conducted me to his houſe, where he welcomed me with the warmeſt marks of affection. He ſpoke——he pauſed——and was in the greateſt perplexity, to find language ſuitable to the ſentiments of his ſoul.

"My brother! (ſaid he), my friend!——or if there "are more ſacred ties in nature or virtue, let me call "you by ſome gentler appellation! we are now united "by the bands of celeſtial amity, one in the ſame holy "faith, and hopes of a glorious immortality. Your "charity reſcued me from a worſe than *Spaniſh* ſlavery, "from the bondage of vice and ſuperſtition; your con-"duct baniſhed my prejudices to the Chriſtian name, "and made way for the entrance of thoſe heavenly "truths, to which I now aſſent. But this is a ſecret "even to my own domeſtics: and, whether ſuch a "caution is criminal, I am not yet able to determine."

With what rapture, what attention, did I liſten to this language! I bleſſed the accents that told me my friend, my *Orramel*, had embraced the Chriſtian faith. An angel's ſong would have been leſs melodious. I looked upward, and, with a grateful elevation of mind, gave the glory to the Supreme Diſpoſer of all human

events. The inſtinct was from above, that firſt moved me to ranſom this young captive; thence was the ſpring of my compaſſion: it would be vanity, it would be the moſt criminal arrogance, not to aſcribe this action to the aſſiſting Deity.

The illuſtrious *Orramel* made it his joy, his ſtudy, to evidence his affection. He told me, his father died ſince we parted in *Spain*; and that he had left five daughters, which he had by ſeveral of his wives. He offered me the choice of his ſiſters, if I had any thoughts of marriage, and promiſed a dowry with her to my own content. One of them, he ſaid, was privately bred a Chriſtian, by her mother, a beautiful woman of *Armenia*. I was pleaſed with the propoſal, and impatient to ſee my fair miſtreſs. In the mean time he made me a preſent of ſeveral rich habits, and two negroes to attend me.

The next day, he conducted me to a fair ſummer-houſe, whither he ſent for his ſiſters; who were all ſo handſome, that I was diſtreſſed with my own liberty, nor knew where to chuſe, had not a principle of piety determined me to the young *Armenian*; who was not ſuperior in beauty to the reſt, but there was a decorum in her behaviour, which the others wanted. She had more of the modeſty and politeneſs of the *European* women, to whom you know I was always partial. My choice was fixed; and the more I converſed with my fair miſtreſs, the more reaſon I found to approve it. We were privately married by a chaplain belonging to the *Britiſh* Envoy. My generous friend gave her a fortune, which abundantly repaid all my loſſes; and, after a proſperous voyage, I am ſafely landed in *Holland*.

I have ſent you this relation, as a memorial of my gratitude to Heaven; whoſe clemency has returned me more than meaſure for meaſure, and largely recompenſed that liberality it firſt inſpired.

Adieu.

LET-

LETTERS

Moral and Entertaining.

PART III.

LETTER I.

To Lady SOPHIA. *The ſequel of the ſtory of* ROSALINDA.

YOU will find me, dear Lady *Sophia*, in a more gay diſpoſition than when I writ my laſt letter. Perhaps the fair ſeaſon has ſome influence on my temper. The ſpring is now in its prime, and blooming Nature appears in all her various pride; the fields and groves reſound with artleſs harmony; the linnet and warbling lark invite me often to riſe with the fragrant morning: nor am I unwilling to obey the gentle ſummons; though, till I came here, I had never beheld the riſing ſun; the ſight was as great a novelty to me as a blazing ſtar would have been; the opening dawn was one of the *arcana* of Nature, into which my curioſity had never pried. Indeed, I had read many poetical deſcriptions of the roſy-fingered morning unbarring the gates of light, and decked in golden veſtments, beginning her progreſs over the *Eaſtern* hills; but I left *Aurora* to her rural hours, without the leaſt inclination to trace her footſteps in the pearly dew. She was no precedent for me; I was too polite to open my eyes at ſuch ungenteel ſeaſons; the ſun ſhone in vain, its beams were uſeleſs till the modiſh world appeared.

But I have now conquered theſe refinements, and can bear the aukward cuſtom of riſing with the freſh morning, and going to bed when the duſky evening cloſes; or I might keep myſelf awake while every other intelligent being on this part of the globe ſleeps; when human

man affairs ceaſe, and the calm creation ſeems lulled in a peaceful ſlumber, except Elves and Fairies. I cannot preciſely determine what hours they keep; but here is a nurſe in the family, who is intimately acquainted (as ſhe ſays) with theſe ſprightly phantoms. She has been admitted to their moon-light revels; and has led me to many a circle diſtinguiſhed with perpetual verdure, where they uſe to dance their light fantaſtic rounds. *Bridget* and *Joyce*, our two dairy-maids, add their teſtimony to the nurſe's, and relate their own viſionary experience. I am no great infidel: ſometimes I believe, and always wiſh the pretty ſtories they tell me were true; but I dare not object againſt any of thoſe relations, for fear of being thought a Heathen by the whole village.

My circumſtances are now very eaſy. My miſtreſs is fully perſuaded my education has been ſuperior to my preſent ſtation, and treats me more like a ſiſter than a ſervant; I am under no reſtraints but thoſe of gratitude and juſtice, which will not ſuffer me to be idle where I know myſelf to be dependent.

For a damſel of quality, I can work well enough with my needle; and as this is all my miſtreſs will ſuffer me to do, I carry my work to ſome verdant retreat, of which here are great variety, in a large garden and wide range of orchard joining to the houſe. I am delighted with old-faſhioned bowers covered with woodbind and ſweet-brier, and can ſit as much at my eaſe on a bank of camomile ſhaded with laurel, as ever I did in a painted alcove. Maple-trees and box, with buſhes of roſes, are placed about in a very agreeable diſorder; the whole ſcene appears gay, but wild above rule or art.

——While Nature here
Wantons as in her prime, and plays at will
Her virgin-fancies.——

Milton.

The orchard joining to it is ſpacious and fair as the *Heſperian* incloſures; violets, primroſe, and crocus, embroider the level green on which you tread; the trees are ſet in rows, their branches mingle above, and are now in their gaudy bloſſoms; the birds ſit careleſs on the flowery ſprays, and from their little throats pour a ſtream

ſtream of harmony, while fragrant gales refreſh the ſenſe, and with their aromatic breath diffuſe gladneſs to the ſoul.

Juſt at the bounds of this luxuriant retreat ſtands an ancient oak; the extended boughs are a ſhelter from the mid-day ſun, which perhaps your Ladyſhip would endure rather than ſcreen your beauty in ſuch a ruſtic ſhade. *Elyſian* groves and myrtle bowers are better ſuited to the delicacy of your imagination; but I am now reconciled to Nature in its greateſt negligence; and, ſeated in this venerable receſs, find virtue and liberty the principal ſprings of human happineſs. My hours are here at my own diſpoſal, nor am I obliged to devote them to ceremony or vain amuſements. I find myſelf under no neceſſity to court the impertinent, or flatter the ambitious, nor to do a thouſand unreaſonable things, for fear of being ſingular, and out of the mode.

The only intimacy I have contracted, is with a daughter of the miniſter of this pariſh. They call her *Sally*. Her converſation is perfectly innocent and agreeable, and has ſomething in it charming beyond all the ſpecious rules and ſtudied elegance of the *beau-monde*. She has ſpent her leiſure in reading, and has certainly peruſed all the good books in her father's ſtudy, having never opened a page on any ſubject but religion, except *Argalus* and *Parthenia*. Her preciſeneſs is all natural and unaffected. Her looks, her words, her whole behaviour, has an air of ſanctity. One can hardly believe her an inhabitant of this world, but rather a native of ſome more refined and holy region. The ſweetneſs of her countenance, with the ſurpriſing beauty of her whole perſon, would confirm this thought, if ſome evidence of mortality did not appear in her declining health. She believes herſelf in a conſumption, and talks of dying as calmly as moſt people talk of going to ſleep.

However, this indifference is not perhaps entirely the effect of piety. A tender paſſion ſeems to have ſome ſhare in it. Her health began to decline from the time her lover died. He was the ſon of a neighbouring clergyman; their marriage was concluded by the conſent of both their parents. There had been an innocent tenderneſs between them from their childhood; and juſt

at

at the period ſet to crown their mutual paſſion, the youth was ſeized with a fever, which ended his life, and left the gentle maid to mourn her diſappointed joys.

Since that, ſhe has no attachment to this world; all her ſchemes of happineſs are in a future ſtate, on which her whole attention is fixed; and nothing can be more ſparkling than her converſation on theſe ſubjects. As ſome people grow dull and moroſe in talking of religion, it brightens her countenance, gives a vivacity to her thoughts, and heavenly eloquence to her tongue. The beauty of the ſpangled firmament in a clear ſummer-evening gives her an apparent pleaſure. "In a little "time (ſhe often ſays) I ſhall have a nearer view of "thoſe radiant wonders, and ſhall myſelf outſhine their "glimmering luſtre."

You would be glad, Lady *Sophia*, if I would leave *Sally* with the angels, and talk to you of Knights of the Garter, blue ribbands, embroidered coats, and other ſublunary things. There is ſuch a wide extreme betwixt theſe ſubjects and heavenly themes, that I cannot introduce your tender affair with any manner of decorum; the deſcent is too precipitate. But if I muſt talk of love, my own amour is ſomewhat more of the ethereal kind than your's, and the tranſition will not be ſo difficult.

Nor will it diſpleaſe you, to hear that my lover continues conſtant, with the addition of ſix thouſand a-year to his eſtate. It was left him by one of the *S*——*r* family, who lately died without an heir.

My miſtreſs has been a conſtant advocate for the lovely youth, believing his propoſal a vaſt preferment for me; while my generous lover makes his addreſſes with greater warmth and aſſurance than when his eſtate was leſs, thinking it now in his power to offer me a reparation for whatever misfortune hath reduced me to a ſtate ſo unequal to what (he is perſuaded) my education has been.

I have not yet accepted his propoſal, nor diſcovered my rank to him; but it is very probable I ſhall do both. What objection can I, or rather what can you, make againſt it? His deſcent is every way illuſtrious, and has vaſtly the advantage of mine. Nature has diſtinguiſhed him with an air of grandeur, beyond all the borrowed luſtre of titles or equipage. There is an elegance in his behaviour

behaviour ſuperior to the rules of art or imitation; not *Paris*, when confeſſed prince on the plains of *Ida*, appeared more graceful. He talks of love, not in the ſtrains of dramatic frenzy, but with the ſobriety of reaſon and virtue. Perſuaſion dwells on his tongue, while he deſcribes the gentle paſſion in accents calm as the midnight-air. What the conſequence will be, I cannot yet determine. Dear Lady *Sophia*, adieu.

ROSALINDA.

LETTER II.

To Lady SOPHIA.

MY romance is now finiſhed, the drama is come to a concluſion: I have been married theſe four months; and from the ſober regular way of life I am now in, you muſt expect no more adventures.

I forgot in my laſt to inform you, that with the ſix thouſand a-year there was a ſeat nobly furniſhed left to ——. What muſt I call him? Not my huſband, for fear the aukward domeſtic ſound ſhould give you the ſpleen. And if I ſhould give him the appellation of my gallant, my lover, or the charming youth, you would think me run mad in romance. But I hope I may call him by his proper name, which is *Lucius*.

The ſeat of which he is now the poſſeſſor, looks like the abode of liberty and guiltleſs delight. The ſituation has ſomething in it ſo jovial and airy, that it gives an alacrity to the mind. It ſtands on a gentle riſing, with the view of a ſpacious valley before it, through which a luxuriant river draws its ſhining train, and bleſſes the borders with immortal verdure; the wide campaign beyond opens a fair variety of hills, of groves, and fertile plains, which terminate in a diſtant proſpect of the ſea. You have this beautiful ſcene of nature from every window in the front of the houſe.

The oppoſite ſide of the ſtructure diſcloſes a quite different view. As that ſeems the triumph of Nature, this appears the inſult of Art. The gardens and groves are ſo exquiſitely fine and regular, that I fancy myſelf in

Fairy-

Fairy-land; it looks all like the effect of inchantment, and beyond human contrivance.

The loves and graces figured in the painted alcoves perſuade me, I am got among the immortals, who ſeem to court me to their ſoft receſſes, when through a long viſta the ſmiling forms riſe in juſt proportion before me, I converſe with deities, and am charmed with the wonders of the poetical world.

I find leiſure enough for theſe viſionary delights, being diſcharged from family-cares by my huſband's grandmother, who is qualified to manage thoſe affairs with great prudence and decency. It is a pleaſure to me to ſubmit to her advice in every punctilio, as I find it obliges *Lucius*, who treats her with the utmoſt deference and reſpect; nor fails to find ſome handſome excuſe for any thing that has the appearance of obſtinacy or caprice in her temper.

His merit in every occurrence ſecures my eſteem. An air of juſtice and benignity ſhines through his whole conduct. His mind was in the ſame elevation when his fortune was at the loweſt; nor has this unexpected turn had the leaſt influence on the modeſty and evenneſs of his diſpoſition. His management in every thing is at once generous and diſcreet. He has devoted a thouſand pounds a-year, out of the ſix thouſand, to charitable uſes; another thouſand he ſecured to me for my peculiar expences; the reſt to be ſpent in his houſhold, the charge of which he has limited to his income, and pays his bills once a-month with great exactneſs, that no honeſt tradeſman may be injured by his delay. Whatever treſpaſs is done by the careleſſneſs of his ſervants, in the purſuit of their rural ſports, he patiently hears the complaints of the ſufferers, and reſtores their damage to the full.

His compaſſion is equal to his juſtice. Never has he been ſeen to turn away from a ſpectacle of pity; never has he ſhut his ears to the voice of diſtreſs; never, by an inſolent reproach, ſilenced the cries of poverty, nor delayed his bounty to the neceſſitous.

Several honeſt clergymen, with large families and narrow incomes, have already experienced his generoſity, and bleſſed their young benefactor. He has taken a ſon of a neighbouring miniſter into the family, who was bred

at

at the univerſity, and is a youth of great piety, and very good ſenſe. He reads conſtantly to us morning and evening prayers, when not a ſervant in the houſe is ſuffered to be abſent.

Lucius has a handſome collection of *Engliſh* and *French* authors. His father lived long enough to ſee him inſtructed in both theſe languages: ſo that his books, with the conv..ation of the young ſtudent, are the agreeable amuſement of his leiſure-hours; which are not ſo many as he ſeems to wiſh, his rank and merit ſtill engaging him in new acquaintance, there being ſeveral gentlemens ſeats ſcattered about in this pleaſant campaign.

I find myſelf more free and diſengaged, having no companion but *Sally*. In her converſation I forget I am below the ſtars, and mingle with immortal beings. Her ſentiments are all elevated and refined; the language of heaven flows from her lips in accents ſweet as an angel's voice. She has a ſurpriſing memory, and ſpeaks the fineſt parts of *Milton* by heart. I fancy myſelf among the celeſtial minſtrels, when ſhe repeats that deſcription, where

——Their golden harps they take,
Harps ever tun'd, that, glitt'ring by their ſide,
Like quivers hang, and, with preamble ſweet
Of charming ſymphony, they introduce
Their ſacred ſong, and waken raptures high.

Mr *Pope*'s MESSIAH is another of her favourite poems; which ſhe recites with ſuch a graceful pronunciation, that it ſeems always new and ſurpriſing.

But while I am enjoying this agreeable ſociety, I know it is a pleaſure that is ſtealing from me, like ſome fair flower, whoſe bloom withers while I am regaling my ſenſe with its fragrancy. The young ſaint is bidding adieu to mortal things, and preparing for her native ſkies. I brought her hither, to try if the change of air would mend her health: but I ſee no advantage ſhe has by it; and, finding her impatient to return, I have promiſed to carry her in my chaiſe to-morrow back to her father's houſe. I go the more willingly, that I may

make a viſit to the peaceful abode where I ſpent ſo many happy hours.

I know not if my miſtreſs has yet recovered the confuſion ſhe was in at the diſcovery of my quality. As for *Lucius*, it ſeemed to be no ſecret to him. He told me, there was ſomething in my behaviour that convinced him I was not in my proper ſtation; but by what misfortune I was ſunk, he could never make the leaſt conjecture. My conduct, he thought, was too reſerved to ſuffer him to ſuſpect any thing to my diſadvantage; and when he found my concealment was on a religious account, it gave him the higheſt ſatisfaction, to find it in his power to place me in circumſtances more agreeable and independent.

Two or three days after I was married, I writ to my father with all the ſubmiſſion and tenderneſs that natural affection could dictate. I am informed he relents, and is pleaſed with an alliance to this Noble family. But I have not yet had the honour of any letter or meſſage from his Lordſhip. Oh! could I throw myſelf at his feet, and once more hear his paternal bleſſing, my happineſs were compleat!

The PASTORAL I have incloſed, was only writ as a ſolitary amuſement; which makes me ſend it without any apology, or giving myſelf the airs of being an author. I hope it will not diſpleaſe you, that my ſhepherd happens to be a Chriſtian; and that the paſtoral ſcene lies on the *Britiſh* plains, as long as I leave you to wander at your leiſure in the vale of *Tempe*, or follow your fleecy charge on the fair *Arcadian* paſtures. Adieu.

Your's, &c.

ROSALINDA.

A PASTORAL.

HENRY and *LUCY*.

Henry. LUCY, while reſting in this verdant ſhade,
By pow'r divine thus elegantly made,
Say, can'ſt thou envy pomp and regal rooms,
Gay with the luxury of *Perſian* looms?

Or

Or painted roofs, whoſe beauty would entice
The thoughts through all the fabled joys of vice?
Fabled, indeed! true joys it cannot boaſt,
Since pleaſure flies when innocence is loſt.
Remorſe, Deſpair, and ev'ry cruel gueſt,
Become the inmates of the guilty breaſt.

Lucy. How ſpotleſs, *Henry*, is thy well-turn'd mind,
Averſe to ill, to follow good inclin'd!
With thee converſing, every day I learn
New charms in ſacred Virtue to diſcern;
And emulous of thee, with joy purſue
That goodneſs I admire and love in you.

Henry. Thou need'ſt not learn of me. In Nature's book,
Thou may'ſt on thy Creator's wiſdom look:
And as the planets run their conſtant race,
His glorious footſteps in their order trace.
He bids the ſun in all its beauty riſe,
To bleſs our ſoil, and gild the vaulted ſkies;
And, by the word of his almighty pow'r,
Ordains the moon to cheer the midnight-hour;
While ſparkling ſtars in ſolemn order wait,
Upon her ſilent courſe, to grace her ſtate.

Lucy. Nor in the ſkies alone his pow'r is ſeen;
We view it in the grove, and flow'ry green.
To imitate whoſe charms, all art is faint.
The roſe's glowing bluſh what hand can paint?
Or equal the pale lily's ſnowy hue?
Or emulate the corn-flow'r's gloſſy blue?

Henry. Sure, *Lucy*, we, like the firſt pair, are bleſt,
While here, ſecure with innocence and reſt,
Our happy hours on downy pinions fly;
When thus aſſiſted by Faith's ſtedfaſt eye,
Upon our Maker's works we humbly gaze,
And, for their goodneſs, render him the praiſe.
Thus, in the Patriarch's days, the *Jewiſh* ſwains,
Who fed their flocks on *Mamre*'s fruitful plains,
Worſhipp'd *Jehovah* in the woods and field,
And prais'd his name for all the fruit they yield;
Implor'd his mercy to direct their ways,
To guard their nights, and ſanctify their days.

But, see! the ev'ning o'er the dewy lawn
Already has her sable curtain drawn.
Homeward we'll go, and, as we slowly walk,
Beguile the tedious way with farther talk.

LETTER III.

From the same, to Lady SOPHIA.

MADAM,

THE day after I writ to you last, I carried *Sally* home; where I left her, not thinking, when we parted, that we were to meet no more in this world: but so it proved. She languished about three weeks, and then, without any struggle, or convulsive pangs, gently resigned her breath.

With what impatience she attended the happy period, the inclosed will inform you. She writ it a few days before she died, and gave it in charge to one of her friends to deliver to me.

To ROSALINDA.

Dear Lady Frances,

"MY sands are now running low. The springs of "life will soon cease. The dust is returning to "its native dust, and the immortal part to its great o- "riginal. The happy day is dawning, which shall ne- "ver be shaded with succeeding night. Some glimmer- "ings of celestial glory break through the gloom, and "scatter the horrors of death. I hear from far the "harps of heaven in soft preludiums call me to the "skies.

"I shall shortly mingle with the morning-stars, and "converse with the first-born sons of light. I shall "enter the blessful assembly, and be numbered among "the glittering attendants of the empyrean courts. The "Supreme Excellence shall unveil itself, and suffer me "to gaze on uncreated beauty. I shall feel the force, "and breathe the raptures of immortal love. The smi-

"ling

" ling moments, crown'd with joy, and ever-blooming
" life, muſt now begin their everlaſting round.

" The ſtormy ocean is paſt, the ſhort fatigue fulfilled;
" the peaceful haven is in view. I am juſt ſetting my
" foot on the bleſsful coaſt. The charming land of
" love, the aromatic breezes, already meet me from
" the fragrant ſhore, and cheer me in the laſt faintings
" of nature.

" Dear Lady *Frances*, adieu. Till now I never bid
" you a glad farewel, nor parted without reluctance.
" But we ſhall meet in more ſerene climates. We ſhall
" meet in the fulneſs of joy, in the elevations of glory.
" Mine, indeed, by the juſt degrees of recompence,
" will be a ſtation far below your's. My probation has
" been only the paſſive exerciſe of content and patience.
" But ſuch virtue as your's, which has triumphed on all
" the gay allurements of the world, ſhall meet a glori-
" ous diſtinction. The noble army of martyrs will re-
" ceive you to their number, grace you with the radiant
" circlet and victorious palm, and record your conqueſt
" in the annals of heaven.

" I ſpeak this, to animate your virtue, to encourage
" you in the race of glory. I am now paſt flattery, or
" dependence on the greateſt of mortals. But I feel
" the moſt tender concern for your happineſs, and ſhall
" carry the gentle impreſſion to the regions of exalted
" friendſhip, the native dominions of love, to which I
" am now going. Once more, my dear *Roſalinda*, a-
" dieu."

This letter came to me with the ſad tidings of her death. No language can deſcribe my grief in its juſt emphaſis. You will give me leave to weep, and ſympathiſe with

Your

ROSALINDA.

LETTER IV.

To CARLOS.

AS you was the confident of my unjuſt deſign, in viſiting *Philander* at his country-ſeat, you have rea-

ſon to expect I ſhould inform you of the ſucceſs of that adventure.

I had a ſecret paſſion for *Aſpaſia* before her marriage with this Noble youth, and flattered myſelf with ſome hopes of finding her prepoſſeſſed in my favour.

You know how exceeding cautious and diſcreet I have been in my pleaſures, and with what diſſimulation I have ſecured to myſelf the character of a man of honour and ſobriety. By this advantage I found it eaſy to impoſe on my friend; whoſe goodneſs was real and unaffected, while his unblemiſhed integrity left him unguarded to all my artifice.

But I found it impoſſible to delude my father by my ſpecious virtues. His penetration ſaw through that diſguiſe by which I had eſcaped the public cenſure. Nor could any thing have been more deteſtable to his open temper than the affectation and hypocriſy of mine. After he had traced one of my moſt criminal intrigues, and found me unreclaimed by his tendereſt admonitions, he reſolved to diſinherit me, and ſettle his eſtate on my younger brother, who is really poſſeſſed of all thoſe good qualities, to which, with a vain oſtentation, I have only pretended.

My brother, perceiving my father's diſguſt, and the intention he had to make him his heir, with an unequalled generoſity gave me intelligence of the threatened misfortune, deſiring me to employ ſome friend to perſuade my father from his ſevere proceeding.

This news came to me while I was detained a willing gueſt by *Philander* at his country-ſeat. I diſcovered the affair to him, who immediately offered to attempt a reconciliation. I gladly accepted the kind intention, nor knew any perſon ſo likely to ſucceed.

Philander propoſed ſtaying two or three days with my father, in order to inſinuate himſelf the more ſucceſsfully. In the mean time, I found but too eaſy acceſs to the fair *Aſpaſia*; and, by an artifice that deſerves the blackeſt infamy, prevailed with her to make a criminal appointment in a private garden belonging to the houſe.

This was the ſecond day of her huſband's abſence. The happy hour (as I then thought it) arrived, when I was

to

to attend my miſtreſs in a ſequeſtered arbour. But juſt as I was entering the walk that led to it, a footman came haſtily after me with a letter from *Philander*, which brought me the welcome news of his ſucceſs with my father. The vaſt ſatisfaction he expreſſed for having procured this reconciliation, with the real concern for my welfare, which appeared in every line, raiſed a ſenſe of honour in my ſoul. I read the letter again, and found my guilt aggravated by its bright reverſe. My falſehood was heightened by the warmth and fidelity with which the generous man had purſued my intereſt. My crime ſtood before me in its moſt infamous view. But how to extricate myſelf from this perplexity, I was entirely at a loſs.

To neglect an opportunity I had with ſuch ſolicitude obtained, to diſappoint a yielding beauty, to dare the effects of her contempt or reſentment, by acting contrary to all the gallant maxims of the world, was doing the utmoſt violence to a diſpoſition like mine. But then, to wrong my friend with an evidence of his fidelity in my hand, where every tender line would reproach ſuch villany, *Alexander* and *Scipio* (I told myſelf) would condemn me; with many an heroic Pagan, who, in the height of youthful deſires, had conquered the allurements of a guilty paſſion.

It was happy for me, that ſome accident prevented *Aſpaſia* from following me ſo ſoon as ſhe deſigned. I was ſo far from being impatient at her abſence, that I bleſſed every moment's delay, and was contriving to avoid the interview juſt as I ſaw her entering the garden.

I had been unuſed to mental devotion; and yet, in this dangerous moment, on which my perdition ſeemed to hang, I ſent a ſecret prayer to heaven for aſſiſtance.

Inſtead of flying to the charmer's embraces with the gaiety of a lover, I went forward with a ſlow reluctant pace till we met, and then gave her my friend's letter. As ſoon as ſhe had read it, ſhe told me, "I might be "aſſured it ſpoke the language of his ſoul: and it is "(added ſhe) to the advantageous light in which he has "ſet your character; it is entirely to that you are obli-"ged, for the favourable opinion I have of you."

"Is it, indeed, to this generous man (I replied) that

"I

" I am indebted for the ſhare I have in your eſteem?
" And can I return ſuch goodneſs with the vileſt in-
" gratitude!"——Here I pauſed, ſtill keeping a reſpectful diſtance.

Aſpaſia, with her eyes fixed on the ground, ſtood in a ſilent confuſion. But, in this mute interval, imagine, if you can, what muſt be the conflict of my ſoul! I had ſpoke my laſt, an eternal ſilence muſt certainly have enſued, if the gentle *Aſpaſia*, perceiving my diſtreſs, had not put me out of pain for an apology.

" I ſee (ſaid ſhe) the diſorder you are in. This re-
" treat of honour ought to have been mine. I ſincerely
" wiſh it had been ſo. However, you have led me
" the way, and I owe my recovery to your prudence."

" It was my importunity, Madam, (replied I), that
" drew you into this criminal engagement; for which
" I am going to inflict on myſelf the ſevere penalty of
" ſeeing you no more."

" This was what I was juſt reſolving, (anſwered the
" fair penitent); but you have gone before me in eve-
" ry ſtep of virtue. We muſt indeed meet no more.
" Some diſorder I feel gives me a pretence to retire
" immediately to my chamber; and you may leave this
" place early in the morning, with a proper excuſe for
" not ſeeing me."

She was ſeated under a ſhade of jeſſamine, and appeared charming as the Queen of Love. My philoſophy began to ſtagger, when ſhe haſtily roſe, and left me in an agony of mind which no words can expreſs.

However, I had ſo much command of myſelf as not to follow her. My reaſon exerted all its powers. The Divinity within ſpoke with a commanding force, and bid the wild tempeſtuous paſſions be ſtill. My ſoul obeyed the ſacred dictates, while truth and friendſhip took full poſſeſſion of my breaſt.

I haſted early the next morning from this dangerous place; and muſt own to you, this action has given me a pleaſure in reflexion ſuperior to all the gratifications of ſenſe.

Your's, &c.

ALCANDER.

LET-

LETTER V.

To CARLOS, *from the ſame.*

AFter your ſevereſt raillery on my conduct, I hope you will pardon me for being a reaſonable creature, and not inſiſt on my making an apology for following the dictates of honour and gratitude. To your cooler thoughts, virtue may not perhaps appear ſo trivial and fantaſtic a thing. In your ſplenetic intervals, falſehood and treachery will probably loſe their charms, and put on an aſpect of horror and deformity. When the ſagacity of youth is paſt, and a few years have impaired your underſtanding, you may grow ſuperſtitious, and be whimſical enough to fancy friendſhip and truth are words of the moſt ſacred importance. Since it is not impoſſible for you to fall into ſuch errors yourſelf, you ought to paſs a charitable cenſure on my principles and practice, however different from your own.

I have ventured to ſend you this careleſs tranſlation of *Taſſo*'s *Inchanted foreſt*. This beautiful fiction ſeems contrived to arm the ſoul with a noble reſolution in whatever occurrence its virtues are called into action. *Rinaldo*'s inflexibility, I hope, will keep me a little in countenance; though I have not the vanity to run a parallel between the young hero's exploit and mine.

Dear *Carlos*, adieu. Be aſſured I am too much your friend to leave any method untried for your reformation.

ALCANDER.

The INCHANTED FOREST.

[Taken from *Taſſo*'s JERUSALEM, *Book* 18.]

THE dawning light ſcarce hover'd in the eaſt,
When young *Rinaldo* left his wonted reſt;
Compleatly arm'd in all his martial pride,
A coſtly ſcarf was o'er his ſhoulders ty'd:
Unſeen, he paſs'd along each ſilent tent,
And onward to the dreadful foreſt went.

'Twas

'Twas now the ſeaſon when the ling'ring night
Diſputes her empire with the riſing light;
A roſy bluſh here paints the doubtful morn,
'There glimm'ring ſtars th' uncertain ſhades adorn.
'This ſcene the thoughtful hero entertain'd,
As on the ſteep of *Olivet* he gain'd;
'The dawning luſtre, and declining night,
With various beauties entertain his ſight.
" Ye num'rous flaming lamps above, he cries,
" Which deck the lofty temple of the ſkies!
" Thou ſun, whoſe face a golden ſplendor wears!
" Thou ſilver moon, and all ye ſparkling ſtars!
" What trifles to your glories are preferr'd!
" How little we celeſtial things regard!
" A ſparkling glance, the lightning of a ſmile,
" Of heav'n itſelf our eaſy hearts beguile."
Thus reas'ning, he the ſacred hill aſcends,
And humbly there with decent rev'rence bends;
Adoring to the eaſt, he turns his eyes,
His thoughts unbounded reach the inmoſt ſkies.
Mean while the morn in golden veſtments roſe,
Her viſage with a bright vermilion glows;
New beams *Rinaldo*'s creſt and armour gild,
Which dart their luſtre o'er the verdant field;
Refreſhing breezes round him gently play,
And balmy odours on their wings convey;
While from her lap *Aurora* on his head
A cloud of pure celeſtial dew does ſhed;
Dipp'd in th' ethereal miſt, a lucid white
His robes diſplay, and ſtream with ſilver light.
Such when the morning's chearful rays appear,
Such lively looks the op'ning bloſſoms wear;
So looks, renew'd in all its glitt'ring pride,
The ſerpent, when he caſts his age aſide.
The Knight ſtill to the wood his way purſu'd,
Nor any horror in its proſpect view'd;
The fatal foreſt, whence with ſudden dread
The braveſt ſoldiers of the camp had fled,
Appears to him a kind inviting ſhade.
Advancing on, a ſoft melodious ſound
Fills all the fair inchanted grove around;

The

The noiſe of murm'ring currents rolling by,
With ſighing winds, which thro' the branches fly;
The ſwan in dying melancholy ſtrains
In concert with the nightingale complains;
The organ, harp, and human voice, are found
Mingling their notes in one harmonious ſound.
While from above, as others had before,
The youth expects to hear loud thunders rore;
Inſtead of theſe, the ſongs of *Syrens* finds,
The chant of birds with warbling waves and winds.
Amaz'd, he now his haſty ſteps ſuſpends,
And forward now with cautious paces bends;
No obſtacle his paſſage yet withſtood,
Beſides an ample, ſmooth, tranſparent flood,
From whence a thouſand riv'lets break away,
Which thro' the ſhades in wanton windings ſtray;
Their banks were with luxuriant verdure crown'd,
And painted flow'rs adorn'd the ſmiling ground.
Rinaldo paus'd, when inſtantly appear'd
A ſtately bridge on golden arches rear'd,
Preſenting croſs the ſtream a ſpacious way,
Which he undaunted paſs'd without delay;
Nor ſooner touch'd the river's diſtant brinks,
But down the viſionary ſtructure ſinks;
And what before in gentle waves roll'd by,
A torrent ſwells, and lifts its billows high.
No bounds the ſudden inundation knows,
Riſing like floods increas'd by melting ſnows.
The hero fearleſs ſtill his courſe purſues,
And whereſoe'er he turns, freſh wonder views;
For whereſoe'er he turns, a ſudden ſpring
Appears, and blooming flow'rs their odours bring;
The lily courts him, and the fragrant roſe
At his approach with brighter crimſon glows;
Their cryſtal arms the bubbling ſprings diſplay,
And living fountains open in his way;
The branchy trees their verdant pride renew,
From ev'ry leaf diſtils ambroſial dew;
The waters, winds, and tuneful birds again,
Join'd with the voice and lute, begin their ſoothing ſtrain;
Nor yet appears to whom the melting ſong,
The human voice, and charming lute, belong.

Suſpended

Suſpended he remains, and ſcarce believes
His waking thoughts, or what his ſenſe perceives;
When iſſuing from the foreſt's lofty ſhade,
He finds an ample plain before him ſpread:
A wondrous myrtle in the midſt appear'd;
Aloft in air its ſtately head was rear'd;
Its height the palm and cypreſs far ſurpaſt,
And all beneath a cloſer ſhadow caſt.
Around the leafy arms extended wide,
It tow'ring ſtood, of all the grove the pride;
On the prodigious plant he fix'd his eyes,
Till more prodigious things his mind ſurpriſe.
A pregnant oak with ſudden rupture parts,
While from its trunk a blooming virgin ſtarts;
Numbers like her their hollow priſons rend,
And on the plain in ſhining robes deſcend.
So dreſs'd, the graceful *Cynthia* haunts the groves;
Such are her nymphs, and ſuch the goddeſs moves.
Their folding veſts above the knee were ty'd,
Their ſlender legs the ſilken buſkins hide;
Their ſnowy arms were bare; their locks behind
Diſhevel'd hung, and wanton'd in the wind.
Like theſe appear the beauteous ſylvan race,
When o'er the lawns the flying prey they trace;
No bows indeed they held, nor quivers wore,
But warbling lutes in their fair hands they bore;
A circle round the wond'ring Knight they made,
And danc'd in artful meaſures as they play'd.
" Hail lovely youth! (they ſung), our Lady's care!
" For thee theſe ſoft receſſes we prepare;
" For thee ſhe fondly languiſhes all day,
" And waſtes her life in reſtleſs fires away;
" Theſe groves thy abſence lately ſeem'd to mourn,
" But all look freſh and gay at thy return."
While with theſe melting ſtrains they charm his ears,
A ſweeter voice he from the myrtle hears,
And iſſuing thence a lovelier nymph appears.
If ancient times, with pious awe inſpir'd,
Silenus in his antic form admir'd,
What had the ſuperſtitious dotage been,
The mad effect of this ſurpriſing ſcene!

Her

Her ſhape was human; but a heav'nly grace,
And beauty all divine, adorn'd her face.
With doubtful eyes *Rinaldo* views the fair,
And ſoon recals *Armida*'s tempting air;
Then with a ſoft alluring penſive look,
Which meant a thouſand tender things, ſhe ſpoke.
" Art thou return'd, the cauſe of all my pain?
" Do I behold thoſe fatal eyes again?
" Doſt thou at laſt, ungrateful man! relent,
" And pity my fond youth in ſorrow ſpent?
" Or as an enemy purſue me here?
" For this thy arms and threat'ning looks declare.
" But I no enemy, no traitor fear'd,
" When o'er the flood the golden bridge I rear'd;
" When gaudy flow'rs along thy path were ſtrow'd,
" And living ſprings to entertain thee flow'd."
Approaching nearer then, ſhe ſoftly cries,
" Remove this envious helmet's vain diſguiſe,
" And let me view again thoſe charming eyes."
With that a moving tear ſhe fondly ſhed,
While from her cheeks the haſty bluſhes fled;
Then ſigh'd, and downward caſt her lovely eyes;
And ſoft complaints, and kind reproaches, tries:
Her words the coldeſt adamant would move,
And melt the moſt obdurate heart to love.
The youthful hero feels the kindling fires,
And timely from his dang'rous foe retires;
Again he ſcorns her wiles, and fiercely drew
His ſhining ſword, and at the myrtle flew.
Armida runs before with eager haſte,
Then twining round her darling plant embrac'd;
" Oh ſtay, ſhe cries, ſtay thy inhuman hand,
" Or let thy weapon in my breaſt be ſtain'd."
Unmov'd and deaf to all her pray'rs he ſtood,
And lifts his ſword to hew the fatal wood.
Th' inchantreſs ſoon another method tries,
And as in dreams uncouth chimera's riſe,
She ſtalks a monſtrous bulk before his eyes;
A duſky gloom her changing face o'erſpread;
Vaniſh'd the ſnowy white, and youthful red;
Then like *Briareus*, with his hundred hands,
A mighty giant in his view ſhe ſtands;

And fifty flaming ſwords at once ſhe wields,
And ſhakes aloft as many blazing ſhields;
Her nymphs appear like horrid *Cyclops* arm'd:
But nothing his undaunted heart alarm'd.

The martial youth his ſounding ſtrokes renew'd,
While hollow groans the ſounding ſtrokes enſu'd;
Stupendous terrors fill'd the darken'd place,
Reſembling now the black infernal ſpace;
Thunder'd the louring heav'ns with dreadful ſound,
Echo'd in ſubterranean vaults the ground;
Trembled the earth, lighten'd the flaſhing ſkies,
While warring winds from every quarter riſe.

Rinaldo ſtands the raging tempeſt's frown,
Till one fierce ſtroke fells the tall myrtle down;
Th' inchantment ends, the phantoms diſappear,
The ſtorms are huſh'd, the heav'ns ſerenely clear.

LETTER VI.

To ALBANUS.

YOU ſeem at preſent ſuſpended between virtue and vice; your mind is in ſuch a myſterious ſituation, that it is not eaſy to determine to what claſs you belong. One can hardly call you a ſaint, the flattery would be too apparent; and yet it would be a little uncharitable to put you in the oppoſite rank, where your own modeſty has placed you. But my buſineſs is not to diſpute what you are, but to give you the information you deſire, and from my own experience to reſolve on which ſide the advantage of pleaſure falls.

You imagine I have acted in both the characters of ſaint and ſinner, and tried the extremes of virtue and vice. In the laſt I am too much experienced: but this makes me more capable of paſſing a cenſure; for I was a ſort of philoſophic libertine, and purſued pleaſure for the ſake of demonſtration. I pauſed, I reaſoned, I made critical reflexions on every enjoyment; I propoſed ſomething beyond gratifying a low and ſenſual inclination; mine was a deliberate ſearch after happineſs; while the method was wrong, my end was right; but every guilty

experiment

experiment brought its own conviction, and left me reſtleſs and diſappointed.

Sometimes I exclaimed in proſe, ſometimes in verſe. I burleſqued the vanities of life, and the weakneſs of human nature; I turned moraliſt, looked grave, and acted ſoberly. But this was a ſituation too cold for my temper; it was neither ſleeping nor waking: this ſupine indolence was but a poor exchange for the jovial activities I had reſigned; nor could I aſſent to that ſpiritleſs maxim, That *virtue was its own reward*, if there was no future expectation. *Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die*, appeared to me a much more rational concluſion.

However, this deliberation, this pauſe, this moral eſſay, and reſtraint of my paſſions, was the firſt ſtep I made towards real happineſs. In the abſence of ſenſual amuſements, my thoughts found leiſure for a nobler application; my ſoul grew familiar with itſelf, and ſought acquaintance with intellectual beings. Diſtreſſed with the viciſſitude of mortal things, it traced back its own divine original, and claimed paternal refuge from the great Spring of all exiſtence. I felt the attraction ſtrong as the bands of Nature; that felicity I had blindly ſought, the unknown God I had ignorantly worſhipped, now revealed himſelf to me, as the ſovereign good, and my peculiar bliſs.

How an almighty agent acts, no language of men can deſcribe; but I felt the ſacred influence. I heard the heavenly ſound, the ſoft melodious voice, calling me away from earthly vanities; while a ray of celeſtial beauty ſparkling on my ſoul, eclipſed the glories of the world, and darkened all the pride of Nature; the miſts of ignorance and error vaniſhed before the divine illumination, which, with a pleaſing evidence, compelled my aſſent to the glorious truths it propoſed; my apprehenſions were enlarged, and a ſanctity of diſpoſition infuſed; thoſe heights of virtue which I once thought impracticable, now appeared eaſy, and attended with ineffable delight, ſuch as gave me ſome delicious prelibations

Of thoſe immortal banquets, thoſe rich draughts
Of vital pleaſure, which my thirſty ſoul
Shall drink for ever in.——

Theſe are no fantaſtic deluſions, but real and divine enjoyments, ſuch as enlarge the mind, and give it a nobler diſpoſition, while, conſcious of its own grandeur, it reſts in nothing below boundleſs and immortal felicity.

This is what you ſeem anxiouſly to inquire after. How happy ſhall I be, if my experience can direct you in ſuch an important ſearch! You will excuſe the ſending you theſe negligent lines on a ſubject ſo ſuperior to my genius.

On HAPPINESS.

WHatever diff'rent paths mankind purſue,
Oh, *Happineſs!* 'tis thee we keep in view!
'Tis thee in ev'ry action we intend,
The nobleſt motive, and ſuperior end!
Thou doſt the ſcarcely finiſh'd ſoul incline;
Its firſt deſire, and conſcious thought, is thine;
Our infant breaſts are ſway'd by thee alone,
When pride and jealouſy are yet unknown.
Through life's obſcure and wild variety,
Our ſtedfaſt wiſhes never ſtart from thee.
Thou art of all our waking thoughts the theme;
We court thee too in ev'ry nightly dream:
Th' immortal flame with equal ardor glows,
Nor one ſhort moment's intermiſſion knows;
Whether to courts or temples we repair,
With reſtleſs zeal we ſearch thee ev'ry where;
Whether the roads that to perdition lead,
Or thoſe which guide us to the ſtars, we tread,
Thine is the hope, th' ineſtimable prize,
The glorious mark, on which we fix our eyes!
Thy charms th' enamour'd libertine entice
Through all the wild deſtructive paths of vice.
Th' advent'rous man refines on ſin, and makes,
In ſearch of thee, to hell new-beaten tracks;
Inchanting Pleaſure dances in his ſight,
And tempts him forward by a treach'rous light.
But while thy flatt'ring ſmiles his thoughts inflame,
Thou prov'ſt to him a mere fantaſtic name,

A fair deluſion, and a pleaſing cheat,
A gaudy viſion, and a ſoft deceit;
Which while the wretch purſues with eager pace,
And ſeems to overtake thee in the race,
An airy phantom mocks his cloſe embrace;
His arms in vain the ſportive ſhade would fold,
Still like a gliding ghoſt it ſlips his fondeſt hold:
The diſappointment heightens yet his rage,
And tempts him with freſh ardor to engage;
Succeſsleſs, but unweary'd in the ſtrife,
He ſtill purſues thee to the verge of life;
With life compell'd his dotage to reſign,
The laſt deſpairing ſigh he breathes is thine.

The pious man directs his vows to thee,
And proves thy moſt pathetic votary.
Virtue itſelf, ev'n virtue he regards;
But as thy favour the fatigue rewards.
To ſilent ſhades, and ſolitude obſcure,
Far from the world thou doſt his ſteps allure;
But there he lives retir'd, a glorious epicure,
And gladly quits the fleeting joys of ſenſe,
In ſearch of bliſs more laſting and intenſe.
Not ſuch as the fond lover's heart beguiles,
When, without art, his yielding miſtreſs ſmiles;
Not ſuch as fills the youthful hero's mind,
When wreaths of victory his temples bind:
His thoughts a nobler luxury would prove,
Such as the bleſs'd immortals know above;
A ſpark divine like theirs his breaſt inflames,
Enjoyments all divine like theirs he claims,
Licentious and unbounded in his aims.
To Pleaſure's ſacred ſpring his ſoul aſpires,
There only hopes to quench his infinite deſires.
Not envious hell the paſſion can ſuppreſs,
Fir'd by thy name, alluring *Happineſs!*
Undaunted he maintains the gen'rous ſtrife,
And ſtruggles for thee to the cloſe of life;
Then joyful claſps thee in his dying arms,
And yields his breath, poſſeſs'd of all thy charms.

This is the concluſion to which I ſtand, after the exacteſt trial of ſenſual and intellectual pleaſures. With-

out hesitation I give my voice on the side of virtue; and this in the gayest period of my life, unruffled with adversity or disappointment, in the affluence of fortune, and the luxury of youth; with a mind capacious of bliss, and panting after happiness.

In this situation you cannot object against the severity of my temper. However, as few persons care to be wise at other people's expence, I cannot expect, that, without any farther trial, you will acquiesce in the judgment of

Your most humble servant.

LETTER VII.

To LUCIUS.

IT was you that proposed this subject to my muse, but I have hardly the vanity to hope the performance will please a judgment so exact as your's. However, it is entirely submitted to your censure, by

Your most humble servant,

LINDAMOR.

An ODE on LOVE.

ASsist my doubtful muse, propitious Love,
Let all my soul the sacred impulse prove:
For thine's a holy unpolluted flame,
Howe'er the libertine profane thy name;
Howe'er, with impious cant, hypocrisy
And senseless superstition blemish thee.
The pure result of sober reason thou;
Thy laws the strictest honour must allow:
Thy laws each vitious thought controul;
From thee devotion takes its flaming wings;
Thou giv'st the noblest motion to the soul,
And govern'st all its springs.
To great attempts thou gen'rous minds dost move,
And only such are privileg'd to love;
Th' heroic race, the brightest names of old,
Were all thy glorious votaries inroll'd.

Without

Without thee, human life
A tedious round of circling cares would be,
A curs'd fatigue, continual ſtrife,
And tireſome vanity.
Thy charms our reſtleſs griefs controul,
And calm the ſtormy motions of the ſoul:
Before thee pride and enmity,
With all infernal paſſions, fly.
And couldſt thou in the realms below
But once diſplay thy beauteous face,
The damn'd a ſhort redreſs might know,
And ev'ry terror fly the place.
From thee one bright unclouded ſmile
Would all the torments there beguile;
Thy ſmiles th'eternal tempeſts could aſſuage,
And make the damn'd forget their rage;
The ſulph'rous waves would ceaſe to rore,
And calmly glide along the ſilent ſhore.

Had *Orpheus* (as 'tis fabled) through the ground
To hell the gloomy paſſage found,
His warbling voice, his melting lyre,
Nor artful touches on the trembling ſtring,
Had ne'er obtain'd his bold deſire,
Nor charm'd the Furies with their ſullen King;
But love, his tender theme, had love been nam'd,
That potent ſound alone had all their malice tam'd.

On thee the graces and delights attend,
On thy propitious influence
Our gayeſt hours depend;
Whatever charms the ſoul or ſenſe,
Beauty and ſacred harmony,
Accompliſh'd Love! belongs to thee.
To thee his ſhining genius *Strephon* owes,
His juſt ideas, and expreſſions fit;
To thee *Cleora* owes that ſprightly wit,
Which from her lips in eaſy language flows.

The mute creation owns thy ſway,
And things inanimate thy laws obey;
At thy command the firſt confuſion ceas'd,
Chaos and wild diſorder were appeas'd;

Diſcord

Diſcord and fierce Antipathy grew mild,
The gleams of light thro' yielding darkneſs ſmil'd,
And warring elements were reconcil'd:
Nature begun a ſteady courſe,
Govern'd by central charms, and ſympathetic force.
But in the bleſsful ſkies alone,
Almighty Love! thy pow'r is fully known:
There they view thy charming face,
Painted with endleſs ſmiles, and ever-blooming grace.
Thy gentle torch burns there for ever bright,
And ſcatters round a mild propitious light;
All feel its pleaſing influence,
While pure deſires thy golden ſhafts diſpenſe.

Th' immortal lovers, crown'd with fragrant flow'rs,
In roſy ſhades, and bleſsful bow'rs,
To thee devote their happy hours,
While active joys too noble for diſguiſe,
And vital pleaſures, ſparkle in their eyes;
To thee alone, great Love, their heav'n they owe,
The boundleſs ſource whence all their bleſſings flow.
Thy ſacred flame
Does ev'ry heav'nly breaſt inſpire,
And tune the ſtrings of each celeſtial lyre;
In flow'ry vales, to ev'ry bleſsful ſtream,
With melting notes, they celebrate thy name;
Backward they roll the long extent
Of ages infinite, and ſing thy great deſcent.

No fabled *Venus* gave thee birth,
At *Cyprus* yet the goddeſs was not nam'd,
Nor at *Idalia*, nor at *Paphos* fam'd:
Nor yet was feign'd from foaming ſeas to riſe;
For yet no ſeas appear'd, or fountains flow'd:
Nor yet diſtinguiſh'd in the ſkies,
Her radiant planet glow'd.
But thou waſt long ere motion ſprung its race,
Ere chaos and immeaſurable ſpace
Reſign'd their uſeleſs rights to elemental place;
Before the ſparkling lamps on high
Were kindled up, and hung around the ſky;
Before the ſun led on the circling hours,
Or vital ſeeds produc'd their active pow'rs;

Before

Before the firſt intelligences ſtrung
Their golden harps, and ſoft preludiums ſung
To Love, the mighty cauſe whence their exiſtence ſprung,
Th' ineffable DIVINITY,
His own reſemblance meets in thee.
By this thy glorious lineage thou doſt prove
Thy high deſcent; for GOD himſelf is *Love.*

LETTER VIII.

From SYLVIANA; *giving an account of her manner of life before her marriage with the Earl of* ———.

MADAM,

YOur curioſity is very obliging, in deſiring to know my manner of life, till I had the honour of being married to my Lord ———. The account indeed would be perfectly inſignificant without that circumſtance; 'tis only my relation to him that gives me a concern for the decorum and propriety of my conduct, in the high ſtation to which he has advanced me.

I muſt own, that my ſcrupulous diſſent from ſome faſhionable freedoms makes my behaviour appear ſomewhat ſingular and preciſe among the gallant part of the world; but I hope, in this general toleration, I may, with indemnity, be a Chriſtian (though not a prude) at ſixteen. If this is an error, the prejudice of education muſt be my excuſe, which keeps me from giving my aſſent to many of the genteel maxims of the age. Nor will you be ſurpriſed at my nicety, when you know by what ſtrict precepts the early part of my life has been governed.

My father was a country-clergyman, a perſon of exemplary piety; who, with a benefice of three hundred a-year, treated his poor pariſhioners with great hoſpitality, and made a decent proviſion for his own family. My mother was bred a Diſſenter; and continued ſuch, till either her eſteem for my father, or the force of his arguments, prevailed with her to join in communion with the national church.

I was the eldeſt of three daughters, which were all the

the children they had. We were carefully inſtructed in the rules of juſtice and truth; and bred in the greateſt ſanctity of manners. No excuſe, but ſickneſs, ever detained us on *Sundays* from the public worſhip; nor were the intervals ſpent in any idle amuſements. The whole day was ſacred, and obſerved with a juſt ſolemnity. Through the reſt of the week, prayers were conſtantly read mornings and evenings in the family: nor would my mother ever ſuffer cards or dancing in the houſe.

My two ſiſters were the prettieſt demure things that ever were ſeen. They applied themſelves with great diligence to aſſiſt my mother in any of her domeſtic concerns; but my temper being more ſprightly, houſewifery and plain-work were my averſion. Reading was my prevailing attachment; and I had turned over every book in my father's library, except *Latin* and *Greek*. But here was not one play or novel for my entertainment. However, I was ſupplied with amuſements of this kind by my Lady *Worthy*'s youngeſt daughter; who was our neighbour, and was pleaſed to honour me with ſome degree of intimacy. But I peruſed theſe authors with great ſecrecy, and not without ſome inward remorſe; this ſort of reading being againſt my father's ſevere injunctions, and the pious rules I had been taught.

This was my manner of life till I was fifteen; when a brother of my mother's, a *Turky* merchant, died, and, having no child, left me twenty thouſand pounds, with only ſome ſmall legacies to my ſiſters. This advance of fortune gave me ſome diſtinction with my Lady *Worthy*; who, about the ſame time, had a fine ſummer-houſe painting. The ſtory was, *Diana* hunting with her nymphs. Her Ladyſhip deſired my mother, that I might be drawn for one of the virgin-train.

Some time after this painting was finiſhed, my Lord ——— came accidentally into theſe parts of the country; and waiting on my Lady *Worthy*, as they were in the ſummer-houſe, he took particular notice (I know not why) of the nymph for whom I had ſat to the painter. Her Ladyſhip finding my Lord a little inquiſitive, ordered a ſervant to call me to drink tea with them. I obeyed, without the leaſt ſuſpicion what was the motive of her command.

I had hitherto looked on every mortal man with equality and indifference; nor found any thing to anſwer the deſcription of poetical heroes, and dramatic beaux: but the moment I ſaw my Lord, every grace, every charm, appeared real, which before had pleaſed my imagination in agreeable fictions. The inchanting form, the fatal glance, the reſiſtleſs ſmile, the gentle, the prevailing accent, Love with his whole artillery ſeemed to inſult me, and never more entirely ſubdued a mind ſo artleſs and unexperienced. However, to conceal my diſorder, I withdrew as ſoon as the company would permit.

But how transformed was my ſoul from that guiltleſs calm I had till now enjoyed! The equality of my temper was broken. My thoughts had all a different turn. I went to church indeed; but ſaid my prayers as mechanically as a clock ſtrikes. I joined in ſinging the pſalms; but with no more underſtanding than the chimes repeat a tune to which they are ſet. Not only the next world, but this, was effaced from my memory. There were no flowers in the field, nor ſtars in the ſky. My whole attention was fixed on the lovely youth; his idea was ſtill in view; or if any other object interrupted the pleaſing reverie, it was only to give me vexation. I was angry with every mortal, for not looking ſo handſome, nor talking ſo agreeably, as the charming man I admired.

I was ſome tedious days in ſuſpence, whether my Lord had one favourable thought of me: but my doubts were agreeably ſatisfied, when I found he had deſired my Lady *Worthy* to procure my father's conſent, in order to make his addreſſes to me. My father embraced the offer with a juſt ſenſe of the honour that was done him.

For my part, I had never practiſed any diſguiſe; and was unacquainted with all forms, but ſuch as were the dictates of nature and virtue; nor was it poſſible for me to conceal the tender inclination; it was as viſible in my ſilence, as the moſt pathetic words could have made it. After I knew my Lord's character, and was convinced of his affection for me, I had a ſort of vanity in owning a ſenſe of his merit. This, I thought, juſtified the

the height of my paſſion: nor could I find any reaſon to violate my native ſincerity, and affect indifference, where it would have been a crime to have been really inſenſible.

My Noble lover expreſſed ſome impatience to conclude the affair; which was done with great ſecrecy and expedition. He ſuffered but one ſervant to attend him; and was ſo obliging, to ſtay a month after our marriage in my father's family. The ſcenes of low life were a diverting novelty to him; while love and innocence made the hours glide ſmoothly on. This period was all paſtoral and romantic. The golden age ſeemed to be renewed with *Ovid*'s OENONE. I could have wiſhed the Noble youth diveſted of his hereditary honours; poſſeſſed only of a ſnowy flock, and graced with no diſtinction, but that of the *Lovely Swain*.

Then unmoleſted we had liv'd, and free
From thoſe vexatious forms which greatneſs brings;
While rocks and meadows, ſhades and purling ſprings,
The flow'ry valley and the gloomy grove,
Had heard of no ſuperior name to Love.

However, I did not yet know the toils of grandeur; nor feel the effects of my ſplendid vaſſalage. I lived my own way, dreſſed and undreſſed myſelf. My mother, ſince the advance of my fortune, had kept me in fine lace caps, and clean ſilk nightgowns; and, as I had plenty of flaxen hair falling into natural curls, my dreſs was eaſily adjuſted, and ſeemed to pleaſe my Lord exceedingly. The little waiting on I had, was by *Cicely*, my mother's head ſervant. I had no notion of the *grand monde*, nor the part I was to act in it.

I had never ſeen *London*. The *Mall*, *Hyde-park*, the *Drawing-room*, and *Theatre*, were leſs known to me than the planetary worlds.

In this ſtate of nature, of darkneſs, and original ſimplicity, imagine to yourſelf what muſt be my perplexity, when my Lord carried me with him to make my firſt appearance in town, among the congratulations of his numerous friends! I found myſelf among a rank of people, to whoſe language, habits, and manners, I was as

as much a ſtranger, as if I had been in a foreign country.

My Lord had deſired a ſiſter, who lived with him, to procure every thing proper for me to appear with: and ſhe ſpared no coſt in jewels, or whatever elſe vanity itſelf could wiſh. She had been ſolicitous in her choice of a woman and chambermaid for me; and they were really two of the fineſt people I had ever ſeen in my life. My woman (being much older than myſelf) I looked on as my ſuperior; and could hardly forbear making an apology for the trouble I gave her. I ſpoke to her in very gentle and ſubmiſſive terms: nor was it poſſible for me to get rid of the ſecret veneration, which the gravity of her countenance gave me. However, my lively temper was apt to make ſome gay excurſions. When I was at firſt initiated in the myſteries of dreſs, I was not quite ſo ſerious, as ſhe ſeemed to think the importance of the affair required.

While my head was dreſſing, I was merely paſſive, as long as Mrs *Dupin* ſuffered me to ſit reading. I left the ball on my ſhoulders to be adorned as ſhe thought fit; which, after two hours toil, I ſometimes found ſwelled to ſuch an enormous ſize, with flowers, feathers, and bits of ribbon, that I could not help begging her to reduce it to a dimenſion more agreeable to my ſhape; which, being ſlender, did not require a globe of that magnitude to adorn it.

But I was generally more inclined to cry than laugh on this occaſion. The hours thus ſpent were an inſupportable fatigue to me: nor could I anſwer to my conſcience for ſuch a vain expence of time. My being had a ſuperior end; I was formed for immortality; which grand concern forbid me ſpending more hours at the toilet, than in my devotions. I had been taught theſe antiquated maxims; and however ridiculous they might appear in the gay moments of health, the approaches of death, I knew, would ſet them in their full force, and unqueſtioned evidence.

However, I had no deſign in dreſſing, but to pleaſe my Lord. It was only with regard to him, I was concerned for the figure I made in public. The flattery I heard on my beauty, gave me more confuſion than joy:

nor could I account for the deſign of thoſe addreſſes.

I very innocently told a beau that followed me, that I was married: at which he burſt into a loud laugh. It was ſome ſurpriſe to me, to find him ſo gay at the diſcovery of what I thought would have ſunk him into deſpair. I could not but wonder, that the man who had juſt before been languiſhing and dying, ſhould be ſo overjoyed, to find his pretenſions loſt, and his caſe hopeleſs: for I really thought he made love with an honeſt intention to marry me, only he had miſtaken my circumſtances.

My next lover was the moſt intimate friend my Lord had. The fine things he ſaid, I took for raillery. Indeed it appeared ill jeſting with ſuch ſacred things as friendſhip, and the honour of a family. However, I concealed his extravagance; and treated him with a coldneſs ſo real and unaffected, that he ſoon recovered himſelf.

But you may eaſily imagine what a ſound theſe gallant propoſals muſt have to one ſo unacquainted with the modiſh world; and who had never heard thoſe vices named, but with terms of infamy and reproach.

After this account of myſelf, you will not wonder to find me ſo little at eaſe in the high ſtation to which I am raiſed. With what regret do I look back to the inglorious ſhades, the humble ſcenes of my paſt tranquillity! I was a ſtranger to ambition; but love ſeduced me from thoſe peaceful retreats, where my firſt happy days were ſpent. 'Tis only my affection for my Lord, that helps me to ſupport this illuſtrious bondage, this ſplendid miſery. But, as ſincerely as I love him, I cannot, without a ſigh, recal the harmleſs freedom, the unmoleſted innocence, in which the earlieſt part of my life was paſt; and am ſurpriſed to find myſelf the object of moſt people's envy, while in reality I merit their compaſſion. I am, without ceremony,

MADAM,

Your's, &c.

LET-

LETTER IX.

To Mr A———.

I Have been contemplating on the period of all human glory among the tombs in *Weſtminſter-Abbey*. Here the moſt towering ambition finds its limits: inſulting Death has fixed the bounds, and pronounced the imperial mandate, *Hitherto ſhalt thou go, and no farther*; and, *Here ſhall thy proud waves be ſtayed.* The wildeſt boaſts of mortal vanity yield to the dreadful conqueror; the glory of nature, with all the accompliſhments of art, are humbled together in the duſt.

Here in one horrid ruin, lies
The great, the fair, the young, the wiſe:
Th' ambitious King, whoſe boundleſs mind
Scarce to a world could be confin'd,
Now, content with narrow'r room,
Lies crouded in this marble tomb;
Death triumphs o'er the boaſted ſtate,
The vain diſtinctions of the great;
Here in one common heap they lie,
And, eloquent in ſilence, cry,
Ambition is but vanity!

And ſee, this ſculpture tomb contains
Of beauty the abhorr'd remains;
That face which none unmov'd could view,
Has loſt th' inchanting roſy hue;
Thoſe once reſiſtleſs ſparkling eyes
No more can heedleſs hearts ſurpriſe;
That form, which ev'ry charm could boaſt,
In loathſome rottenneſs is loſt.

See there the youth, whoſe chearful bloom
Promis'd a train of years to come;
Whoſe ſoft addreſs, and graceful air,
Had ſcarce obtain'd the yielding fair,
When Fate derides th' expected joys,
And all his flatt'ring hope deſtroys.

There ſleep the bards, whoſe lofty lays
Have crown'd their names with laſting praiſe;

Who, though eternity they give,
While heroes in their numbers live;
Yet theſe reſign their tuneful breath,
And wit muſt yield to mightier death.
Ev'n I, the loweſt of the throng,
Unſkill'd in verſe, or artful ſong,
Shall ſhortly ſhrowd my humble head,
And mix with them among the dead.

I am now reconciling myſelf to theſe gloomy abodes. I would grow familiar, I would contract an intimacy with Death, in order to meet the griſly phantom without conſternation.

But what I am here contemplating, is only the dark ſide of the proſpect, which diſappears whenever my thoughts turn to the bright reverſe. Death is then no more a meagre ſkeleton followed with a train of terrors, but comes in an angel's form, with a gay retinue of heavenly loves and graces; he comes the kind meſſenger of my liberty and happineſs, with a ſmiling aſpect, beckoning me away from theſe ſtormy regions, to the worlds of unclouded light. The ſcenes of immortality are opened before me; the palm, the ſtarry crown, with all the bright rewards of virtue, appear in view. Oh, when will the happy period come, which ends this mortal ſtory! but my friendſhip for you ſhall outlive the date of this tranſitory exiſtence, and be the ſame when I am no more, after the formalities of this lower world,

Your humble ſervant,

THEOPHILUS.

LETTER X.

To Lady ——; from a Sylph.

YOU will find this letter on a bank of violets, where I have often the pleaſure to ſeat myſelf near you, unſeen; and never fail of being entertained with that vivacity, and innocent wit, that ſparkles in your converſation. However negligent you are of your inviſible admirer, your earlieſt part of life has been my care: my ſervices

ſervices claim the pre-eminence of all my mortal rivals, and give me a right to make my pretenſions, before your heart admits an earthly paſſion.

I have followed your early rambles over the flowery lawns, guarded you on the verge of murmuring ſtreams, and ſcreened your beauty from the ſultry noon. I have fanned you with my golden plumes, and breathed the fragrance of the ſpring about you. By me the muſic of the groves has been improved, while I have joined with the feathered chorus to divert you; the nightingale, for you, has prolonged her melodious ſtrain, and from ſome flowery ſpray entertained you with her nightly ſerenade.

Theſe harmleſs gallantries, inſtead of moleſting, have indulged your tranquillity; for mine is an affection ſuited to your guiltleſs inclination, and conſiſtent with the moſt refined virtue. Indeed, this is the ſuperior charm, the powerful attraction, that has gained you a celeſtial lover; thoſe divine graces, thoſe ſparklings of goodneſs and generoſity, that ſacred impreſſion of virtue heaven has ſtamped on your ſoul, charm me beyond your lovely perſon; and yet I view your blooming beauty with delight, and find a guiltleſs tranſport in your ſmiles. I am captivated with thoſe looks of benevolence and peace, which ſcatter univerſal joy and alacrity about you. The guiltleſs gaiety of your temper, and inoffenſive wit, divert me. I love to mimic the ſweetneſs of your voice, aud repeat the charming accent in a thouſand ſportive echoes.

Were not the view of ethereal beauty forbidden to any of mortal race, I might inſult all human vanity, and defy the moſt glorious rival among the ſons of men. Was I permitted to appear in the roſy bloom of celeſtial youth, with my golden zone, my purple-wings, and glittering tiara, I ſhould outſhine the moſt ſplendid birth-night beau.

But I am not permitted to convince you of my ſuperiority, till your date of mortal life is expired; and then, if you continue ſtedfaſt to the rules of virtue, you ſhall be mine by all the engagements of celeſtial love. I will lead you in triumph to the bleſsful fields, and charming bowers, ſurpaſſing the moſt poetical deſcription of *Cyprian* groves, or *Heſperian* gardens. What you call

palaces, and magnificent ſeats, are but dens, but dwelling in the duſt, compared to the dazzling habitations of the aerial race. The region is for ever calm, the ſkies for ever unclouded.

No ſtormy winter enters there,
'Tis jovial ſpring through all the year.
Soft gales through groves of myrtle blow,
The ſtreams o'er golden pebbles flow;
Freſh Youth and Love their ſportive train
Lead o'er the ever-verdant plain;
Ethereal forms in bright array
Along the bleſsful current ſtray;
Or wander through Elyſian *groves,*
Or banquet in the gay alcoves;
And oft in amaranthine bow'rs,
Repoſe on fragrant beds of flow'rs,
While Muſic with her ſoothing ſtrains
Warbles through all the woods and plains;
The hills, the dales, and fountains round,
With heav'nly harmony reſound.

But numbers fail, human language loſes its energy, and grows inſipid, while I would paint the wonders of the immortal world; neither can I deſcribe, nor will you be able to conceive, theſe tranſporting ſcenes, till the happy time comes when they ſhall be unveiled in ſurpriſing pomp before you. Till then, I am

Your inviſible admirer,

ARIEL.

LETTER XI.

To EUSEBIUS.

IT is with great pleaſure I obey you, in diſcovering the preſent ſituation of my thoughts; ſince the tranquillity I enjoy in this retirement, is partly owing to thoſe pious principles you endeavoured to inſtil into my early youth.

You was well informed of my paſſion for Lady *Diana* ——; nor can you have forgot how many excuſes I framed

framed to my father, to prevent his deſign of ſending me into foreign parts, till all events ſucceeded to my wiſh, and I was married to the charming maid. But the nuptial pomp was hardly paſt before death blaſted my happineſs, and ſnatched the lovely prize from my arms.

The only way I could then think of, to divert the violence of my grief, was travelling; hoping by variety of objects to efface the painful impreſſion. Accordingly, I made the tour of *France* and *Italy*, amuſing myſelf with whatever was grand or entertaining. I converſed with men of ſenſe and merit, and ſometimes was favoured with the ſociety of women of diſtinguiſhed beauty and reputation; I indulged myſelf in all the little gaieties of life, within the limits of reaſon and morality: but nothing could blot the image of my charming wife from my ſoul. I brought back my affection for the fair departed ſaint to the mournful manſion where I enjoyed and loſt her.

But here leiſure and reflexion had a better effect than a thoughtleſs ſeries of diverſions. Though my courſe of life had always been regular, and governed by the rules of ſobriety, yet till now I was a ſtranger (except in form) to any thing of devotion; nor had ever experienced the ineffable ſatisfaction of a virtuous mind in its ſecret addreſſes to the Supreme Being. My ſoul had not yet reflected on its own grandeur, nor conſidered itſelf formed for an infinite and unchangeable felicity.

Thoſe grave and ſublime authors which were once the uſeleſs ornaments of my library, are now my ſerious entertainment. By theſe I have been directed to look beyond all the periſhing ſcenes of nature, to that immutable ſtate of happineſs, which after a ſhort probation attends the practice of virtue. My thoughts grow calm, my paſſions appeaſed, the goods and evils of time vaniſh into nothing, at the proſpect of boundleſs and immortal pleaſure.

The great temple of the ſkies, the ſpangled arch of heaven, is frequently the place of my devotion; the open view of the gay creation, or the lonely ſolitude of a wood, inſpire me with a ſacred warmth. But oh! when the propitious Divinity, by ſome divine emanation, makes me ſenſible of his preſence, with what contempt

do

do I look back on the leſſening world! how taſteleſs, how inſipid, are all its amuſements! How calm, how peaceful, in thoſe happy intervals, are the regions of my ſoul! its wiſhes are anſwered, and all its deſires appeaſed. I have enough, I aſk no more. Can they languiſh for the ſtreams, who drink at the overflowing fountain? His benignity is better than life; immortal pleaſure is in his ſmiles; and whom he favours, muſt be neceſſarily bleſſed.

Thus abſtract from human things, I converſe with the great Spirit of the univerſe, and in the rapture of my thoughts often addreſs him in ſuch ſoliloquies as theſe.

" It is the dignity of my nature, oh Supreme of be-
" ings, to adore and praiſe thee! But how art thou to
" be extolled by mortal man? The language of paradiſe,
" the ſtrains of immortality, fall ſhort of thy perfections;
" the firſt-born ſons of light loſe themſelves in bleſsful
" admiration, in ſearch of thy excellency; even they
" with ſilent ecſtaſy adore, while, veiled with ineffable
" ſplendor,

" *The bright, the bleſs'd Divinity is known,*
" *And comprehended, by himſelf alone.*

" Who can conceive the extent of that power, which
" out of nothing brought materials for a riſing world,
" and from a gloomy chaos bid the harmonious univerſe
" appear!

" *Confuſion heard his voice, and wild uproar*
" *Stood rul'd, ſtood vaſt infinitude confin'd.*

Milton.

" At thy word the pillars of the ſky were framed, and
" its beauteous arches reared; thy breath kindled the
" ſtars, adorned the moon will ſilver rays, and gave
" the ſun its flaming ſplendor.

" *Thy glory, in her ſilent courſe the moon,*
" *And nightly lamps in their obſcure ſojourn,*
" *The morning-ſtar with its bright circlet crown'd,*
" *And early bluſhes of the day, reveal:*
" *The circling ſun thy greatneſs manifeſts;*
" *Whether aſcending from the eaſtern wave,*
" *With glancing ſmiles he cheers the dewy fields;*

" *Or*

" *Or mounted to the zenith's lofty height,*
" *He blazes with tranſcendent glory round;*
" *Or down the ſteep of heav'n he rolls amain,*
" *And ends his flaming progreſs in the ſea;*
" *From eaſt to weſt thy grandeur he proclaims,*
" *And thro' his radiant kingdoms ſpreads thy praiſe.*

" Thou didſt prepare for the waters their capacious " bed, and ſet bounds to the raging billows; by thee " the hills were crowned with plenty, and the valleys " dreſſed in their flowery pride; the ſummer and win- " ter, the ſhady night, and the bright revolutions of the " day, are thine; in all the wonderful effects of nature, " we adore and confeſs thy power.

" *Thou rid'ſt upon the wild tempeſtuous wind,*
" *And flying ſtorms obey thy potent voice;*
" *Sublime on clouds thy dark pavilion ſet,*
" *With ſhades and gloomy majeſty involv'd;*
" *Thy hands the pointed lightnings lance around,*
" *While peals of thunder ſhake the firmament;*
" *At thy approach the kindling foreſts ſmoke,*
" *And from their baſe the trembling mountains ſtart;*
" *The rivers ebb and flow at thy command,*
" *Obſerve their wonted courſe, or run reverſe;*
" *At thy rebuke the frighted waves divide,*
" *And with ſtupendous motion backward roll*
" *Their cryſtal volumes to their inmoſt ſpring.*
" *Thou all things canſt; thy mighty mandate heard,*
" *Neceſſity and nature are no more;———*
" *Th' obedient elements reſign their league,*
" *And wonderful effects atteſt the God!*"

Theſe, my dear friend, are the entertainments that brighten my ſolitude, and free my ſoul from its former engagements; thoſe fading graces on which I once doated, vaniſh before a ſuperior excellence, as ſtars before the riſing ſun; inſtead of repining, I adore, I juſtify the great diſpenſing Power, that has removed the darling of my affections to fix them on immortal beauty. I have loſt nothing amiable or attractive, but what is found with divine advantage in the fair Original.

I know you will congratulate me on this happy change. It muſt pleaſe you to find that your pious inſtructions, joined to the ſanctity of your example, have not been entirely loſt on,

Reverend SIR,

Your moſt obedient humble ſervant,

AMINTOR.

LETTER XII.

To the ſame.

SIR,

I have obeyed your commands, in ſending the incloſed. You will not require an apology, for an eſſay on this tranſporting ſubject. Joy and gratitude will ſpeak, however diſproportioned the expreſſions.

On our SAVIOUR'S *nativity.*

VIctorious Love! how uncontroul'd thy pow'r!
How great thy triumph, on that glorious hour!
The high-rais'd thrones above look'd down to ſee
The vanquiſh'd God a captive led by thee.
His ſplendor in mortality diſguis'd,
The principalities of heav'n ſurpris'd;
Th'indulgent ſkies ſmil'd on the happy birth,
While peace and joyful wonder huſh'd the earth.
Fly, rigid winter, with thy horrid face,
And let the ſoft and lovely ſpring take place;
Oh! come, thou faireſt ſeaſon of the year,
With garlands deck'd, and verdant robes, appear;
At once produce the ſummer's various coſt,
Whatever ſweets her flow'ry ſtores can boaſt:
Full caniſters of *Sharon*'s roſes ſpread,
And dreſs with art th' illuſtrious infant's bed;
Rifle the gardens, ſearch the painted fields,
For all the blooming glories nature yields.
But, O ye products of the earth! how poor,
To heav'n's enamel'd plains, are all your ſtore!

Perpetual

Perpetual greens, and never-fading flow'rs,
Enrich with ſoft perfumes th'immortal bow'rs;
And yet he left the bright ethereal ſeats,
For theſe cold regions, and obſcure retreats.
Be huſh'd, ye winds, no angry tempeſt rove;
But ſink in gentle whiſpers through the grove:
With all *Arabia* load your balmy wings,
And breathe the fragrance of ten thouſand ſprings.
Begin, you ſweet muſicians of the air!
Let Nature all her ſoothing ſounds prepare;
Let tuneful Art her various meaſures bring,
Each melting tone, and ev'ry warbling ſtring;
Let pſalt'ries, harps, and the loud cymbal ring:
Let the ſhrill trumpets raiſe their ſprightly voice,
While *Carmel*, and high *Lebanon*, rejoice.
He comes, O *Jacob*, thy long-promis'd King!
Celeſtial envoys the glad tidings bring:
O'er earth's wide compaſs to the diſtant main,
With truth, and perfect juſtice, he ſhall reign.
The ſparkling ſkies ſhall tarniſh and decay,
The ſun be quench'd, the ſtars ſhall fade away;
But he ſhall riſe with a propitious light,
Stand at high-noon, and ſhine divinely bright.

I ſhall now leave you to your own ſublimer contemplation on this unbounded theme, and ſubſcribe myſelf,

SIR,

Your moſt obedient humble ſervant,

AMINTOR.

LETTER XIII.

To a gentleman in France, *from his ſiſter; giving him a relation of her lover's misfortunes.*

My dear brother,

AS my paſſion for *Valerius* had in its beginning your approbation, you will not blame my conſtancy at a juncture when the unhappy youth has no other conſolation.

lation. His misfortunes have brought thoſe virtues into view, which in the height of proſperity he never found occaſion to exert; and as his merit riſes, you will not reproach me, in finding my attachment to him more ſteady and reſolved, than in the ſplendor of his fortune.

You know how much my father piques himſelf on his quality, and how averſe he was, when you left us, to *Valerius*'s propoſal, on no other account but his being a citizen, though a man of great virtue and wealth. However, this laſt motive, after ſome deliberation, prevailed. I was ſuffered to receive his addreſſes, and every thing was preparing to celebrate the marriage.

Valerius had always behaved himſelf in ſo obſequious a manner to his father, that he put a conſiderable ſtock into his hands, which the young merchant had improved, by two or three ſucceſsful voyages into *Turky*; ſo that it was in his power to make a ſettlement vaſtly above my fortune, and far beyond my father's expectation. But while the lawyers were buſy in drawing up the articles, an unexpected misfortune put a ſtop to the whole affair.

The father of *Valerius* was an honeſt man, but exceeding credulous; and was (unknown to his ſon) drawn into many engagements, for the debts of an extravagant brother, to whoſe intereſt the compaſſionate old man was too much attached. He ſoon found his error, being ſurpriſed with ſeveral arreſts on his brother's account, for more than his whole eſtate could anſwer.

The unhappy youth was quickly informed of his father's diſtreſs, and flew to his relief with all the ſpeed that filial piety could give. One of their friends who was preſent, told me, there never was a more moving interview. After a long pauſe of ſilent ſorrow, the old gentleman charged his ſon not to involve himſelf in any ſtraits on his account, but leave him to ſuffer the effects of his own imprudence.

" I know (continued he) the happineſs of your life " depends on your marriage with the gentle *Lemira*, " which will be entirely fruſtrated by your being con- " cerned in this affair; nor is your whole fortune ſuf- " ficient to diſengage me from this confinement; but " Death will ſoon bring me a full diſcharge from a per- " plexity, into which my too great credulity, and ill-

" placed

" placed compaſſion, has betrayed me. Yet this, and " any thing I can endure with fortitude, rather than you " ſhall ruin your own fortune to extricate mine. Pray " leave me, (ſaid he); the concern your looks diſco- " ver, is at preſent my heavieſt affliction."

The ſorrowful youth immediately withdrew; and, ſending for all the creditors, found that his whole ſtock, except what was at ſea, added to his father's, would hardly do juſtice to many honeſt traders demands, who muſt be ruined, with their families, without ſatisfaction. But to whatever exigence he reduced himſelf, he reſolved to diſcharge his father; which he ſoon accompliſhed by a handſome compoſition.

Valerius's whole dependence now was on the return of the *Turky* fleet, where he had conſiderable effects. But my father was ſo angry with him for engaging in his father's affairs, that he forbid me ever ſeeing or thinking any more of him as a lover. Nor did the torrent of his adverſity ſtop here; for within a few days he had intelligence, that two ſhips belonging to him, richly laden, were in their return taken by a *Spaniſh* pirate.

I was ſoon informed of this diſaſter, and writ immediately to *Valerius*, in the ſofteſt language that a paſſion like mine could dictate; and (to conceal nothing from you) I offered to marry him, and put into his poſſeſſion that part of my fortune which was left by my aunt, entirely in my own power. If you ſhould condemn this romantic inſtance of affection in me, you will certainly approve the conduct of my young philoſopher, who, in this criſis of love and adverſity, could act with ſuch compoſure and true greatneſs of mind, as you will find expreſſed in the following letter.

" *To* LEMIRA.

" THE diſtreſs I am in, too generous *Lemira*, has " not reduced me to ſuch an abject diſpoſition, as, " by accepting the offer you make me of your fortune, " to betray you into a ſtate of neceſſity and contempt, " on ſo low a motive as my own intereſt. Far be ſuch " a ſelfiſh view for ever from my ſoul! You wrong me, " and your own charms, if you think the paſſion they

" have inſpired, will ſuffer me to act any thing unbe-
" coming its grandeur. However my fortunes are ſunk,
" my mind keeps its native elevation, and is untainted
" with any ſelfiſh or mercenary deſign. If I loved you
" leſs, I might perhaps (abſtract from your happineſs)
" purſue my own, and leave you at leiſure to repent
" your raſhneſs, and curſe the mercenary wretch that
" was the inſtrument of your ruin.

" Your father has forbid you marrying me, on the
" forfeiture of his bleſſing; and ſhall I rob you of that,
" and bring the weight of a paternal curſe on your head!
" Shall I ſeduce you from the affluence and ſplendor of
" fortune, to ſhare in my diſtreſſes, and ſtruggle with
" the inconveniencies of low life! Could I ſee you re-
" duced to want and obſcurity, in hopes it might be a
" ſolace to my own miſery, and leſſen my lot of human
" cares! No: let me ſtand acquitted by Heaven and
" earth of ſuch baſeneſs as this.

" Will you call this coldneſs? will you term it indif-
" ference; and not rather the utmoſt effort of affection,
" the triumph of a generous paſſion? Oh, *Lemira*,
" you are dearer to me than life! next to Heaven, I
" love you. In parting with you, I abandon every
" earthly joy; I quit my whole ſhare of human hap-
" pineſs, and muſt ſink into the laſt dejection, if reli-
" gion did not ſupport me with its divine conſolations.

" And here the morning ſeems to break, a gleam
" of peace ſalutes me, ſome preſaging hopes of a pro-
" ſperous cataſtrophe ſmile through the darkneſs. No-
" thing is impoſſible to an almighty Power. There are
" virtues to which Heaven has annexed promiſes of a
" preſent retribution. It was in the practice of the
" great duties of morality I fell into this extremity;
" and here the divine veracity has engaged itſelf to ſe-
" cure me. All events are in the hands of the Sove-
" reign Diſpoſer; his will makes nature and neceſſity;
" no obſtacle puts a ſtand to his deſigns, nor obſtructs
" the courſe of providence; perpetual beneficence has
" not diminiſhed his ſtores, nor are the ſprings of his
" mercy exhauſted. I muſt own I have received ſome
" conſolation from the verſes incloſed, which were

" written

" written by one of my friends in very diſtreſſed cir-
" cumſtances. I muſt bid you an unwilling adieu.

" *Your's*, &c.

" VALERIUS."

On the DIVINE VERACITY.

BE huſh'd, my griefs; 'tis his almighty will,
That rules the ſtorms, that bids you all be ſtill;
Be calm, ye tempeſts, vaniſh ev'ry care,
While with triumphant faith my ſoul draws near
To God in all the confidence of pray'r.
He has not bid me ſeek his face in vain,
Talk to the winds, or to the waves complain.
He hears the callow ravens from their neſt,
By him their eager cravings are redreſt;
Young lions thro' the deſart roar their wants,
He marks them, and the wild petition grants;
The gaping furrows thirſt, nor thirſt in vain,
(Parch'd by the noon-day ſun), for timely rain;
With ſilent ſuits the fair declining flow'rs
Requeſt, and gain, the kind refreſhing ſhow'rs:
And will th' almighty Father turn away,
Nor hear his darling offspring when they pray?
No breach of faithfulneſs his honour ſtains,
With day and night his word unchang'd remains;
The various ordinances of the ſky
Stand forth his glorious witneſſes on high;
Summer and winter, autumn and the ſpring,
For him by turns their atteſtations bring;
Unblemiſh'd his great league with nature ſtands,
And full reliance on his truth demands:
Nothing that breathes a ſecond deluge fears,
When in the clouds the radiant bow appears.
Can the Moſt High like man at random ſpeak,
Forfeit his honour, and his promiſe break?
Does he that falſely ſwears, his vengeance claim?
And ſhall he ſtain his own tremendous name?
The earth, the heav'ns were witneſs when he ſwore
By his great Self; what would thy fears have more?

And had a greater than himſelf been found,
That greater had the high engagement bound.
Shall fleeting winds th' Almighty's words diſperſe,
Or breathing duſt his ſolemn oath reverſe?
Can he like man, unconſtant man, repent?
Shall any chance, or unforeſeen event,
Start up, his ſettled purpoſe to prevent!
Or can he fail in the expected hour,
A ſtranger to his own extent of pow'r?
What profit can a worm his Maker bring,
That he ſhould flatter ſuch a worthleſs thing?
Why ſhould he condeſcend to mind my tears,
Or calm with ſoft deluding words my fears?
Can he (of perfect happineſs poſſeſt)
Deride the woes that human life moleſt,
Or mock the hopes that on his goodneſs reſt?
Nature may change her courſe, confuſion reign,
And men expect the riſing ſun in vain:
But ſhould th' eternal truth and promiſe fail,
Infernal night and horror muſt prevail;
The thrones of light would ſhake; th' angelic pow'rs
Would ſtop their harps amidſt the bleſsful bow'rs:
No more the ſoft, the ſweet melodious ſtrain,
Would gently glide along the happy plain;
No more would tuneful *Hallelujahs* riſe,
And ſhouts triumphant fill the ſounding ſkies:
Each heav'nly countenance a ſullen air
Of grief and anxious diffidence would wear;
The golden palaces, the ſplendid ſeats,
The flow'ry manſions, and the ſoft retreats,
The roſy ſhades, and ſweet delicious ſtreams,
Would diſappear like tranſitory dreams.
Angels themſelves their brighteſt hopes recline
On nothing more unchangeable than mine.
Am I deceiv'd? what can their charter be?
Fair ſeraphim may be deceiv'd like me.
If goodneſs and veracity divine
Can fail, their heav'n's an airy dream like mine.
But, oh! I dare the glorious venture make,
And lay my ſoul and future life at ſtake;
Be earth, be heav'n, at deſp'rate hazard loſt,
If here my faith ſhould prove an empty boaſt!

Whate'er

Whate'er your arts, ye pow'rs of hell, ſuggeſt,
The truth of God undaunted I atteſt.
Produce your annals with inſulting rage,
Bring out your records, ſhew the dreadful page,
One inſtance where th' Almighty broke his word,
Since firſt the race of men his name ador'd;
In gloomy characters point out the hour,
Exert your malice, ſummon all your pow'r;
With rites infernal all your pomp diſplay,
And mark with horror the tremendous day.
Confus'd, you ſearch your dreadful rolls in vain;
Th' eternal honour ſhines without a ſtain,
Unblemiſh'd ſhines in men and angels view.
Juſt are thy ways, thou King of ſaints, and true!

I incloſed this letter, my dear brother, to ſhew you, with what equality of mind the generous youth behaves himſelf in this diſtreſs. I beg you would haſten your return to *England*, in compaſſion to

Your unhappy friend and ſiſter,

LEMIRA.

LETTER XIV.

To HERMINIUS.

I Have juſt reaſon to fear my eſſay on this noble ſubject will not anſwer your expectation. With whatever fluency I could expreſs myſelf when inſpired by mortal beauty, the pomp of language fails me here; the boldeſt figures loſe their emphaſis, and grow inſipid on this ſuperior theme,

DIVINE LOVE.

FOR thee, fond Love, my darling theme,
My lute has oft been ſtrung;
Thy pow'r, by ev'ry anſw'ring ſtream,
In gentle notes I ſung.
Laurinda taught my muſe her art,
And fill'd with tender fires my heart;

She taught me how to paint thy beauteous face,
Thy charming form, and ev'ry moving grace.

But who ſhall guide the daring ſtrain,
Celeſtial Love! that aims at thee,
Thou faireſt offspring of the Deity?
I call the pow'rs of harmony in vain;
In vain the ſofteſt accents I employ;
The brighteſt metaphors in vain I chuſe,
With all the melting language lovers uſe
To tell their pain, or ſpeak their riſing joy.
All the heights of pure deſire,
Holy love, and heav'nly fire,
At once my panting breaſt inſpire:
Such ardour ſmiling martyrs know,
When, defying every foe,
In triumph on to death they go.

Tell me, thou, for whom I prove
All the fierce extremes of love,
How thy charms, ſo far retir'd
From mortal ſenſe, have all my boſom fir'd.
Greatneſs and fame, beauty and harmony,
Are all but empty names compar'd with thee.
Be thou but mine,
The whole creation I at once reſign.

Vaniſh, thou earth, and ev'ry gawdy ſcene
Of hill and dale, or grove, or flow'ry field,
When by the ſpring adorn'd with chearful green;
Vaniſh whate'er delights thou elſe can'ſt yield:
Thou ſun, be dark; and let eternal night
Conceal thy vital ſplendor from my ſight:
Thou moon, and ev'ry gay ethereal fire,
Burn out your golden ſtore:
I ſhall be bleſs'd, when all your lights expire,
And earth, and ſea, and ſkies ſhall be no more!

Place me where infernal night,
And endleſs horror, reign;
Where, baniſh'd far from hope and light,
Unhappy ghoſts complain:
Ev'n there, one gentle ſmile of thine
Th' eternal gloom would chaſe;

Immortal

Immortal day would on me ſhine,
And pleaſure fill the place.

Should heav'n ſurround me with full tides of joy,
And open all its glories to my ſight,
One frown of thine would all that heav'n deſtroy,
And wither my delight;
One frown of thine th' immortal groves would blaſt,
And darkneſs o'er the bleſsful regions caſt.

You that ſing in happy bow'rs,
And in unmingled pleaſures paſs the hours,
That know the height of heav'nly bliſs,
Come, play me ſome ſoft air of paradiſe;
Gently ſtrike your ſweeteſt ſtrings,
And touch my ſoul on all its tender ſprings,
While, riſing on the muſic's downy wings,
I'll bid at once mortality adieu,
And love and paint the ſacred flame like you.

But, my dear *Herminius*, the preſent performance will convince you, that I have not yet learned the ſtrains of immortality: and perhaps you will not think it neceſſary for me to make an apology for not being an angel. However, if I can contribute to your entertainment as a mere mortal, you may command

Your moſt humble ſervant,

EVANDER.

LETTER XV.

To ALONZO.

YOU have ſpent ſo many happy hours at the Earl of ———'s fine ſeat in the country, that it is unneceſſary to deſcribe thoſe beautiful ſcenes, with which you are ſo well acquainted. Here I have paſſed a great part of the ſummer-ſeaſon, in a manner ſuited to my contemplative humour. Having no taſte for country-diverſions, or any kind of rural ſports, my pleaſures were confined to the charming ſhades and gardens with which the houſe is ſurrounded.

Here

Here I enjoyed an unmoleſted tranquillity, till a fit of curioſity led me to make an excurſion into the wide campaign, that opened before me from the borders of the park.

If I begin with the roſy dawn, you will pardon my romantic ſtyle, in relating the ſurpriſing adventure. But, without telling a lye, the morning was yet duſky; the balmy dew, and fragrant gales, perfumed the air with their untainted ſweets; while, with thoughts free as the airy ſongſters that warble on the branches, I wandered from riſing hills to winding vales, through flowery lawns to leafy woods, till I found myſelf under the ſhade of a venerable row of elms; which put me in mind of Sir *Roger de Coverley*'s rookery. The aged trees ſhot their heads ſo high, that, to one who paſſed under them, the crows and rooks which reſted on their tops, ſeemed to be cawing in another region. I was delighted with the noiſe; while, with the *Spectator*, I conſidered it as a kind of natural prayer to that Being who ſupplies the wants of his whole creation. My thoughts were inſpired with a pleaſing gratitude to the beneficent Father of the univerſe, till the ſequel of my devotion was interrupted by the ſight of a beautiful girl, about four or five years old, ſitting on the graſs, with a baſket of flowers in her lap; which ſhe was ſticking in the ſnowy fleece of a little lamb that ſtood tamely by her.

I began to hope it was one of the fairy race, or ſome pretty phantom that haunted the grove: for the adjacent houſe belonging to this reverend avenue, looked more like a dormitory for the dead, than an habitation for the living. Every thing about it appeared ruinous and deſolate. I could neither hear the voice, nor trace the ſteps of mortal men in this abſolute ſolitude: nor had I any hopes of knowing into what wild region I was got, unleſs the pretty figure ſitting on the graſs could give me ſome intelligence.

I made my approaches very reſpectfully. But what was my ſurpriſe, in drawing near, to find the air, the complexion, every feature in miniature, of the ungrateful *Aurelia*, on whom I once ſo paſſionately doated! A thouſand tormenting ideas ruſhed into my mind at the ſight of this lovely creature; who ſmiled on me with the

the moſt inchanting innocence. While I ſtood eagerly gazing at her, which was not long, *Aurelia* herſelf entered the walk, and confirmed my ſuſpicion, that this child was a living proof of her infamy.

'Tis about ſix years ſince ſhe eloped from the public view, regardleſs of her own illuſtrious family, or the obligations ſhe was under to the generous *Cleone*; who treated her with the utmoſt confidence, and was the laſt that ſuſpected her huſband's criminal affair with her.—Be my own wrongs forgot, and all the contempt with which ſhe treated whatever propoſals honour, and a diſintereſted paſſion, could make.

I found her now an object of pity, rather than reſentment. The dejection of her mind was viſible in her pale haggard looks, and the wretched negligence of her habit. I could hardly perſuade myſelf this was the celebrated thing, that once appeared in all public places with ſuch a parade of equipage and vanity.

She was in the utmoſt confuſion at this interview; till, excuſing myſelf, I told her this intruſion was undeſigned, and purely the effect of chance, as I was taking a morning's ramble from the Earl of ———'s, where I had ſpent ſome time; and that ſhe might depend on my word, not to diſcover her abode to any one in that family.

By this time ſhe was a little compoſed; and invited me to reſt myſelf after my walk. I followed her into the houſe, which looked more like the manſions of deſpair, than a retreat for a lady of pleaſure. An awful ſilence reigned in every room, through which I made a ſhift to find my way by a dim twilight, that glimmered through ſome windows of as antique a figure as thoſe of an old abbey. The furniture, I fancy, has not been diſplaced from times immemorable; it looks more like unwieldy lumber, than any thing deſigned for uſe or ornament. There was nothing of a modern date, but a tea-table; and that in ruinous circumſtances.

It was now about ten o'clock. *Aurelia* ordered tea and chocolate to be brought. All her attendance was a freſh-coloured country-laſs; who withdrew as ſoon as we had breakfaſted.

I was impatient to hear a relation of *Aurelia*'s misfortunes;

tunes; but durſt not aſk any queſtion, for fear it would look like inſulting her diſtreſs; only renewed my excuſes for interrupting her privacy.

To which ſhe replied, "That though I was the laſt "perſon in the ſhorld ſhe would have choſe to be a witneſs of her infamy, yet ſhe thought herſelf happy, in "having an opportunity to make ſome apology for her "injuſtice to me, in refuſing thoſe terms of honour I "once offered, and complying with ſuch reproachful "conditions as had made her the moſt miſerable creature on earth.

"It was my criminal inclination (continued ſhe) for "*Caſſander* that made me inflexible to your intreaties, "and my father's commands to marry you. But whatever wrong this was to your merit, my guilt with "regard to the generous *Cleone* is of a higher nature. "The intrigue I had with her huſband, was attended "with circumſtances of the blackeſt treachery. I had "broke through the tendereſt engagements of friendſhip, and granted all that my diſſolute lover could aſk; "when, finding myſelf with child, to hide my infamy, "he brought me to this diſmal place, an old manſion-houſe belonging to his family; where I am cut off "from human ſociety, except two or three ſtupid peaſants, his tenants, who reſide in ſome part of this "Gothic ſtructure. It is now ſix years ſince I have "breathed and ſlept (for I cannot call it living) in this "melancholy confinement, without hopes of a releaſe, "being entirely dependent on *Caſſander*'s allowance "and caprice, who but too well knows his own power "and my folly; which makes him, inſtead of the humble lover, act the imperious tyrant. His viſits are "ſeldom, his ſtay ſhort, and I am left whole months to "languiſh alone in a deteſted ſolitude.

"This child, (continued ſhe, weeping, and taking "the lovely creature in her arms), this child, which "might have been my joy, proves my greateſt affliction. Should I die, ſhe is immediately abandoned to "hardſhip and neceſſity; ſhould I live, it diſtracts me "to think ſhe may follow my ſcandalous example. How "can I give her inſtructions to avoid thoſe vices which "my practice approves? or recommend that virtue

"whoſe

" whoſe ſacred rules I have ſo openly violated? And " ſtill I love this worthleſs man. Were I penitent, " could I reſolve on a reformation, this leiſure and re- " tirement would be a bleſſing, an advantage to me: " but I am obſtinate in guilt, while I deſpair of happi- " neſs in this world or the next. Till I came hither, " my hours were ſpent in frolic and gaiety. A con- " ſtant ſeries of diverſions ſhortened the days, and " gave wings to the jovial hours, which now have " leaden feet, and, burdened with grief, lag heavily " along. No ſort of reflexion gives me joy. Whether " I look backward or forward, all is darkneſs and " confuſion. I am no way qualified for retirement. " Books are my averſion, thinking is my horror; I " am weary of living, and afraid to die!"

I heard this account with a heart full of compaſſion, and ſaid what I could to perſuade her to break off this criminal commerce with *Caſſander*, and throw herſelf on the care of Providence, and the generoſity of her friends. But I had too much value for my own peace, and too great a contempt for a woman of *Aurelia*'s character, to make any particular propoſals for her freedom; and, bidding her adieu, haſted back to the Earl's, without ſaying one word of my adventure; which I commit to your ſecrecy, and ſubſcribe myſelf

Your moſt humble ſervant,

POLYDORE.

LETTER XVI.

ROSAMOND *to* HENRY II.

Imitated from DRAYTON.

READ o'er theſe lines, the records of my ſhame,
If thou canſt ſuffer yet my hateful name.
Clean as this ſpotleſs page, till ſtain'd by me,
Such was my conſcience, till ſeduc'd by thee.
Chaſte were my thoughts, and all ſerene within,
Till mark'd by thee with characters of ſin.
Had ſome ſucceſsful lover, in the prime,
Of equal years, betray'd me to a crime,

Reſiſtleſs

Reſiſtleſs love had been my beſt defence,
And gain'd compaſſion for the ſoft offence:
But while thy wither'd age had no ſuch charms,
To tempt a blooming virgin to thy arms,
I'm juſtly thought a proſtitute for gold,
A mercenary thing to ſordid int'reſt ſold.
Be curs'd that female fiend, whoſe practis'd art,
With wanton tales, ſeduc'd my guiltleſs heart.
Let her with endleſs infamy be curs'd;
Of all the agents hell employs, the worſt.
Perdition to herſelf the wretch inſur'd,
When ſhe my youthful modeſty allur'd.
Oh, fatal day! when, to my virtue's wrong,
I fondly liſten'd to her flatt'ring tongue!
But, oh! more fatal moment, when ſhe gain'd
That vile conſent which all my glory ſtain'd!
Yet Heav'n can tell, with what extreme regret
The fury of thy lawleſs flames I met;
For, unexperienc'd in the ways of ſin,
A conſcious honour ſtruggled ſtill within.
Oh, could I! but the ill-tim'd wiſh is vain,
Could I my former innocence regain!
Thy proffer'd kingdom, *Henry*, were a prize,
Which, balanc'd with that wealth, I ſhould deſpiſe.
But I no more my ſex's pride can boaſt:
Alas! what has one moment's madneſs coſt!
Not *Woodſtock*'s charming bow'rs can eaſe my grief,
For I muſt fly myſelf to find relief.
Oft, while the ſun in length'ning ſhades declines,
And through the waving trees more mildly ſhines,
Alone through all the beauteous walks I rove,
And hope the ſweets of ſolitude to prove:
But, at my ſight, each verdant proſpect wears
A gloomy view, and ev'ry plant appears
To bend its top, o'ercharg'd with dewy tears.
Methinks each painted bloſſom hangs its head,
Avoids my touch, and withers where I tread.
If angling near a cryſtal brook I ſtand,
And with deluding ſkill the bait command,
The cautious fiſh, that fly the ſnare, upbraid
My heedleſs youth, more eaſily betray'd.

Amidſt

Amidſt the garden, wrought by curious hands,
A noble ſtatue of *Diana* ſtands.
Naked ſhe ſtands, with juſt proportions grac'd,
And bathing in a ſilver fountain plac'd.
When near the flow'ry borders I advance,
At me ſhe ſeems to dart an angry glance.
What ſcenes, alas! can pleaſe a guilty mind!
What joy can I in theſe receſſes find,
For lawleſs and forbidden love deſign'd!
In ſome obſcure and melancholy cell,
Rather a weeping penitent I'd dwell,
Than here a glorious proſtitute remain,
To all my ſex's modeſty a ſtain.
This ſtately lab'rinth, rais'd with vaſt expence,
Diſplays my ſhame in its magnificence.
As through the ſtately rooms I lately walk'd,
And with my woman of its paintings talk'd,
She ſpy'd the draught of *Tarquin*'s wanton flame,
And, heedleſs, aſk'd the injur'd beauty's name.
This (I reply'd) is that illuſtrious dame——
Renown'd for chaſtity, I ſhould have ſaid:
But here a riſing bluſh my face o'erſpread.
Confus'd I ſtopp'd, and left th' inquiring maid.
Lucretia's ſtory on my life had caſt
A black reproach, who yet can live diſgrac'd.
I ſhould, like her, with juſt reſentment preſt,
Have plung'd the fatal dagger in my breaſt.
What ſpecious colours can diſguiſe my ſin,
Or ſtill the reſtleſs monitor within?
Thy greatneſs, *Henry*, but augments my ſhame,
And adds immortal ſcandal to my name;
My odious name, which, as the worſt diſgrace,
The *Cliffords* cancel from their Noble race!
To what propitious refuge ſhall I run,
The terrors of a guilty mind to ſhun?
In vain the ſun its morning-pride diſplays;
I turn my eyes, and ſicken at its rays:
The ſilver moon and ſparkling ſtars, by night,
Torment me too with their officious light;
The glimm'ring tapers round my chamber plac'd,
Acroſs the room fantaſtic ſhadows caſt:

Of all my dreams the melancholy ſcene
Preſents an injur'd, a revengeful Queen.
Laſt night, when ſleep my heavy eyes had clos'd,
To all her rage, methought, I ſtood expos'd!
Wild were her looks, a poiſon'd cup ſhe brought,
And proudly offer'd me the fatal draught.
The deſtin'd bowl I took with trembling hands,
Compell'd to execute her fierce commands.
This diſmal omen aggravates my fears,
Before my fancy ſtill the furious Queen appears.

LETTER XVII.

MARY Queen of *France*, to CHARLES BRANDON Duke of *Suffolk*.

The Princeſs MARY, Henry VIII.*'s younger ſiſter, being in love with the Duke of* Suffolk, *was, for public reaſons, married to* LEWIS XII. *of* France, *who died in ſix months after. The Queen being again at liberty, writes the following epiſtle to the Duke of* Suffolk, *her firſt lover.*

An imitation of DRAYTON's epiſtle.

LET theſe ſoft lines my kindeſt thoughts convey,
And tell thee what I ſuffer by thy ſtay.
Did ſeas divide us, this might well excuſe
Thy negligence, and my fond heart abuſe:
But *Calais* from the *Kentiſh* ſtrand is ſeen;
A gentle current only rolls between.
Nor needs my *Suffolk*, like *Leander*, brave
A threat'ning death in ev'ry breaking wave,
When, guided only by a glimm'ring light,
He croſs'd the ſtormy *Helleſpont* each night.
Tall ſhips, with flying ſails, and lab'ring oars,
Attend to land thee on the *Gallic* ſhores.
But thou art chang'd! That ardour is expir'd
Which once thy wiſhes with impatience fir'd,
When *Savoy*'s blooming Ducheſs ſtrove in vain
From me the conqueſt of thy heart to gain.
Invited by great *Henry*'s martial fame,
The haughty Princeſs, with her brother, came

To

To compliment the King for *Tournay* gain'd;
Where, in a rich pavilion entertain'd,
Thy noble form th' unguarded fair ſurpris'd.
Nor were her tender wiſhes long diſguis'd.
Whatever flatt'ry, love, or wanton art,
Could do, ſhe practis'd to ſeduce thy heart.
Great *Antony*, by ſuch alluremonts gain'd,
For *Cleopatra* all his glory ſtain'd.
But thy firm faith no injury receiv'd;
For you were juſt, or I was well deceiv'd.
Nor were my virgin-vows leſs true to thee:
When young *Caſtile* addreſs'd the court for me,
The charms of proffer'd empire I reſign'd,
And all that could ambition move, declin'd:
A ſofter paſſion had poſſeſs'd my mind;
And while unrival'd in thy breaſt I reign'd,
My thoughts the luſtre of a crown diſdain'd.
But, ah! what changes human joys attend!
On airy chance our brighteſt hopes depend.
Victorious *Henry*'s arms ſtill meet ſucceſs;
The vanquiſh'd *Gauls* at laſt propoſe a peace.
By *Wolſey*'s policy their terms ſucceed,
And both the hoſtile nations are agreed,
While I the public victim am decreed.
Condemn'd to ſhare the *Chriſtian Monarch*'s bed,
And curs'd with that magnificence I fled.
I know my rank no private choice allow'd,
And what a Princeſs to her country ow'd.
Theſe ſplendid maxims ſhould have ſway'd my breaſt,
But love entirely had my ſoul poſſeſt.
How oft I wiſh'd my humble lot had been
Beneath the glorious hazard of a Queen!
That crown'd by rural maids with painted flow'rs,
I rang'd the fields, and ſlept in verdant bow'rs!
Belov'd of ſome young ſwain with *Brandon*'s face,
His voice, his geſture, and his blooming grace!
In all but birth and ſtate reſembling thee!
Then unmoleſted had we liv'd, and free
From thoſe unhappy turns which greatneſs brings;
While rocks and meadows, ſhades and purling ſprings,
The flow'ry valley and the gloomy grove,
Had heard of no ſuperior name to love.

Such ſcenes of this inglorious life I drew,
And half believ'd the charming fiction true,
Till real ills diſſolv'd the pleaſing dreams;
The groves and valleys fled, the lawns and ſilver ſtreams.
The gay fantaſtic paradiſe I mourn'd,
While courts and factions, crowns and cares return'd.
With ſighs I ſtill recal the fatal day,
When no pretence could gain a longer ſtay.
The lovely Queen my parting ſorrow ſaw,
Nor *Henry*'s preſence kept my grief in awe:
No rules of decent cuſtom could controul,
Or hide the wild diſorder of my ſoul;
When ſhipp'd for *France* before the dancing wind
The navy fled, and left my hopes behind.
With weeping eyes I ſtill ſurvey'd the ſtrand,
Where on a riſing cliff I ſaw thee ſtand;
Nor once from thence my ſtedfaſt ſight withdrew,
Till the lov'd object was no more in view.
Farewel I cry'd, dear charming youth; with thee
Each chearful proſpect vaniſhes from me.
Loud ſhouts and triumphs on the *Gallic* coaſt
Salute me; but the noiſy zeal was loſt;
Nor ſhouts nor triumphs forc'd my leaſt regard,
Thy parting ſighs, methought, was all I heard.
But now at *Abbeville* by *Lewis* met,
I ſtrove the thoughts of *Suffolk* to forget:
For here my faith was to a monarch vow'd,
And ſolemn rites my paſſion diſallow'd;
However pure my former flames had been,
Unblemiſh'd honour made them now a ſin.
But ſcarce my virtue had the conqueſt gain'd,
And ev'ry wild forbidden wiſh reſtrain'd,
When at *St Denis*, with imperial ſtate
Inveſted, on the *Gallic* throne I ſat;
The day with noble tournaments was grac'd,
Your name among the *Britiſh* champions plac'd.
Invited by a guilty thirſt of fame,
Without regard for my repoſe you came.
The liſts I ſaw thee ent'ring with ſurpriſe,
And felt the dazzling glances of thine eyes.
Ye ſacred pow'rs, (I cry'd), that rule above!
Defend my breaſt from this perfidious love.

Ye holy lamps! before whoſe awful lights
I gave my hand; and ye religious rites!
Aſſiſt me too; nor let a thought unchaſte,
Or guilty wiſh, my plighted honour blaſt:
While paſſion ſtruggling with my pious fears,
Forc'd from my eyes involuntary tears.
Some tender bloſſom thus, with leaves enlarg'd,
Declines its head, with midnight-dew o'ercharg'd:
The paſſing breezes ſhake the gentle flow'r,
And ſcatter all around a pearly ſhow'r.
From this diſtracting hour I ſhunn'd thy ſight,
And gain'd the conqueſt by a prudent flight.
But human turns and ſov'reign deſtiny
Have ſet me now from theſe engagements free.
The ſtars, propitious to my virgin-love,
My firſt deſires and early vows approve;
While buſy politicians urge in vain,
That public reaſons ſhould my choice reſtrain;
That none but *York*'s or *Lancaſter*'s high race,
Or great *Plantagenet*'s, I ought to grace.
Nor *Suffolk* wants a long illuſtrious line,
And worth, that ſhall in future records ſhine.
They own'd thy valour, when thy conqu'ring lance
Carry'd the prize from all the youth of *France*.
Thy merit *Henry*'s conſtant favour ſhows,
And envy only can my choice oppoſe.
Thy noble preſence, wit, and fine addreſs,
The *Britiſh* and the *Gallic* court confeſs.
Alençon's ſhape, and *Vendôme*'s ſparkling eye,
Count *Paul*'s gay mien, and *Bourbon*'s majeſty,
No longer are admir'd when thou art by.
There nothing wants to juſtify my flame,
The ſtateſmen grant but a poor empty name.
And what's the gaudy title of a King?
What ſort of bliſs can Royal grandeur bring?
When thou art abſent, what's the court to me,
But tireſome ſtate, and dull formality?
This toy a crown, I would reſign, to prove
The peaceful joys of innocence and love.

LETTER XVIII.

PENELOPE *to* ULYSSES.

From OVID.

DIſtracted with his ſtay, yet ſtill the ſame,
True to her ancient vows, and early flame,
Penelope ſalutes her abſent King.
Oh! would himſelf at laſt an anſwer bring!
Proud *Troy* is fall'n, our *Grecian* virgins hate:
Yet not th' unrival'd riches of her ſtate,
Nor all the glories of her monarch's throne,
Can for the pains thy abſence gives atone.
Oh! had the waves, that gently wafted o'er
The luſtful *Phrygian* to the *Spartan* ſhore,
Plung'd in the deep the guilty load they bore!
Abandon'd then I ſhould not waſte away,
In unavailing moans, the lazy day;
Or loſt to joy, and widow'd of delight,
Curſe the dull lagging hours of the more tedious night.
Fruitful of doubts, my love ſtill fear'd for you
Dangers unknown, and greater than the true.
I thought all *Troy* conſpir'd againſt thy head,
And *Hector*'s name, but mention'd, ſtruck me dead.
Trembling I heard of falſe *Achilles* ſlain,
And wept to find the bold deceit was vain.
Tlepolemus fell by the *Lycian* ſpear,
Tlepolemus renew'd my anxious care.
In ſhort, at ev'ry *Grecian* hero's fall,
Thro' the long war before the fatal wall,
A thrilling coldneſs ran thro' every part,
Chill'd up my blood, and ſhudder'd at my heart.
But my chaſte paſſion mov'd the pitying ſkies;
My lord is ſafe, and *Troy* in aſhes lies.
With proſp'rous gales the *Argive* chiefs return,
And to their country-gods *Barbaric* incenſe burn.
The wives in pious gifts declare their joy,
While their ſav'd huſbands tell the fate of *Troy*:
Old men and frighted virgins, fix'd around,
In dumb amazement dwell upon the ſound:

The

The ſoldiers in gay feaſts their cares compoſe,
And mark in wine the ſcenes of ancient woes:
This is *Sigæum*, here ſwift *Simois* flow'd,
There high erect old *Priam*'s palace ſtood;
Here fierce *Pelides* urg'd the dreadful war,
There fix'd the bleeding *Hector* to his car:
There mov'd *Ulyſſes*, certain of ſucceſs,
Greater his conduct, nor his courage leſs:
'Twas *Neſtor* told us all; he told us too
The arts that *Dolon* and the *Thracian* ſlew.
Heedleſs and too forgetful as you were,
In you I'm ſure 'twas criminal to dare:
When you but for one faithful friend alone
Dealt fate to ſquadrons, and provok'd you own,
How well your wife and infant left behind,
How well your tender paſſion fill'd your mind!
I fainted as I heard the dreadful tale;
Scarce your ſucceſs could o'er my fears prevail.
But what's ſucceſs, what's ruin'd *Troy* to me,
Or all the ſavage joys of victory,
If ſtill unbleſs'd, I ſink beneath my pain,
And never muſt enjoy my lord again!
For other wives deſtroy'd, to me ſtill ſtands
The wall erected by immortal hands.
Now plenteous harveſts grow where *Ilium* ſtood,
The ſoil well fatten'd with the natives blood.
O'er ruin'd palaces that reach'd the ſkies,
Low ſpires of graſs, and humble ſhrubs, ariſe.
Still of the conqu'ror's abſence I complain,
Nor know what diſtant worlds my wand'ring lord detain.
Ulyſſes I of ev'ry ſhip require,
The ſailors with repeated queſtions tire:
Hopeleſs and half-deſpairing, yet I write;
The cruel pow'rs, that envy me delight,
May bring at leaſt my letters to your ſight.
To *Pylos* ancient *Neſtor*'s fruitful reign,
And *Sparta*'s injur'd court, I ſent in vain;
For nor from *Sparta*, nor from *Pylos* came,
Ought ſave wild rumours, and uncertain fame.
Again I wiſh *Troy*'s lofty tow'rs might riſe,
And curſe the thoughtleſs vows that gain'd the ſkies.

War's

War's hazards then would be my only care,
And I in common with a thouſand fear:
Now all the dangers of the land and ſeas
Are preſent to my thoughts, and baniſh eaſe:
While you, alas! perhaps with pleaſure rove,
And faithleſs nouriſh a forbidden love;
Take ſome deluding harlot to your breaſt,
And in her arms with lawleſs tranſports bleſt,
Make my dull eaſy conſtancy your jeſt.
Ye pow'rs! avert the thought I cannot bear,
And give my vain ſuſpicions to the air.
Whate'er may be the reaſons of thy ſtay,
Oh! may'ſt thou never willingly delay!
Me to a ſecond choice my fire invites,
Chides my delays, and urges all his rights.
Still let him urge, my love my faith aſſures;
I am, I muſt, I will be ever your's.
Yet my warm pray'rs the good old monarch move,
He views my tears, and mourns my hapleſs love.
But a vile train of thoughtleſs youths proclaim
With lawleſs impudence a ſawcy flame.
Hither from *Zante* and *Samos* they reſort,
And revel unmoleſted in thy court.
Treaſures, the purchaſe of thy blood, they ſeize:
Thoſe ſpoils *Eurymachus*, *Piſander* theſe;
Antinous here with equal rage poſſeſt,
There greedy *Polybus*, a conſtant gueſt,
Plunder around——And need I name the reſt,
Who in your abſence on our vitals prey,
And waſte in coſtly luxury the day?
The beggar *Irus*, a deteſted name,
And baſe *Melanthus* laſt, complete thy ſhame.
'Gainſt theſe inſults what force can I employ?
What thy old father, or thy tender boy?
For his dear life a thouſand ſnares are laid,
And certain ruin aim'd at his unguarded head.
Preſerve him, Heav'n! and if we ne'er muſt join,
Yet may he live to cloſe your eyes and mine.
In vain *Laertes* does his pow'r oppoſe,
Unfit for war, againſt ſurrounding foes.
Telemachus will ſoon to fame aſpire,
Now his ſoft years a parent's aid require.

Oh!

Oh! thou, our only hope and refuge, come,
Diſpel our dangers, and avert our doom;
Form the young hero in the arts of war,
To rival thee, but with more caution dare.
Haſte, and relieve your ſire with years oppreſt:
Once more he longs to claſp you to his breaſt,
Then ſhake off tedious life, and ſink to reſt.
Oh! haſte to me!—A little longer ſtay
Will ev'ry grace, each fancy'd charm decay:
Increaſing cares, and time's reſiſtleſs rage,
Will waſte my bloom, and wither it to age;
Yet at thy ſight wild joys, and ſprightly love,
Shall dying youth recal, and ev'ry charm improve.

Six LETTERS from LAURA to AURELIA.

Giving an account of her brother's criminal amour, and her own paſſion for the handſome hermit.

LETTER I.

COuld your importunity have prevailed with my brother to have left me in *London*, you had been free from the vexation that I ſhall certainly give you, by making you the confident of all my country-adventures; and I hope you will relieve my chagrin, by telling me what the dear, bewitching, buſy world is doing, while I am idly ſauntering away my time in rural ſhades. How happy are you, my dear *Aurelia!* How I envy you the enjoyment of duſt, of crouds and noiſe, with all the polite hurry of the *beau-monde!*

My brother brought me hither to ſee a country-ſeat he has lately purchaſed. He would fain perſuade me it is finely ſituated; but I ſhould think it more finely ſituated in the *Mall*, or even in *Cheapſide*, than here. Indeed I hardly know where we are; only that it is at a dreadful diſtance from the theatre-royal in *Drury-lane*, from the

the opera, from the maſquerade, and every thing in this world that is worth living for.

I can ſcarce tell you whither to direct your letters. We are certainly at the ends of the earth, on the borders of the continent, the limits of the habitable globe, under the polar ſtar, among wild people and ſavages. I thought we ſhould never have come to the end of our pilgrimage; nor could I forbear aſking my brother, if we were to travel by dry land to the *Antipodes*. Not a mile but ſeemed ten, that carried me from *London*, the centre of all my joys.

The country is my averſion; I hate trees and hedges, ſteep hills, and ſilent valleys. The ſatyriſt may laugh; but to me,

Green fields, and ſhady groves, and cryſtal ſprings,
And larks, and nightingales, are odious things.

I had rather hear *London* cries, with the rattle of coaches, than ſit liſtening to the melancholy murmur of purling brooks, or all the wild muſic of the woods. The ſmell of violets gives me the hyſterics; freſh air murders me; my conſtitution is not robuſt enough to bear it; the cooling zephyrs will fan me into a catarrh, if I ſtay here much longer.

If theſe are the ſeats of the muſes, let them unenvied enjoy their glittering whimſies, and converſe with the viſionary beings of their own forming. I have no fancy for dryades and fairies, nor the leaſt prejudice to human ſociety; a mere earthly beau, with an embroidered coat, ſuits my taſte better than an aerial lover with his ſhining treſſes, and rainbow wings.

The ſober twilight, which has employed ſo many ſoft deſcriptions, is with me a very dull period; nor does the moon (on which the poets doat) with all her ſtarry train, delight me half ſo much as an aſſembly-room, illuminated with wax-candles. This is what I ſhould prefer to the glaring ſun in his meridian ſplendor. Daylight makes me ſick; it has ſomething in it ſo common and vulgar, that it ſeems fitter for peaſants to make hay in, or country-laſſes to ſpin by, than for the uſe of people of diſtinction.

You pity me, I know, dear *Aurelia*, in this deplorable

rable ſtate. The whole creation is a blank to me, it is all joyleſs and deſolate. In whatever gay images the muſes have dreſſed theſe ruſtic abodes, I have not penetration enough to diſcover them: not the flowery field, nor ſpangled ſky, the roſy morn, or balmy evening, can recreate my thoughts. I am neither a religious nor poetical enthuſiaſt; and without either of theſe qualifications, what ſhould I do in ſilent retreats, and penſive ſhades?

I find myſelf little at eaſe in this abſence of the noiſy diverſions of the town. It is hard for me to keep up my ſpirits in leiſure and retirement. It makes me anxiouſly inquiſitive what will become of me when my breath flies away. Death, that ghaſtly phantom, perpetually intrudes on my ſolitude; and in ſome doleful knell from a neighbouring ſteeple, often calls upon me to ruminate on coffins and funerals, graves and gloomy ſepulchres. Theſe diſmal ſubjects put me in the vapours, and make me ſtart at my own ſhadow; nor have I acquired any great degree of fortitude by turning freethinker, and unlearning

All that the nurſe and all the prieſt have taught.

Mr Pope.

You have been too often of our party, not to know my brother is a very infidel. He has a ſort of vanity in making me a proſelyte, and freeing my mind from thoſe prejudices (as he calls them) and ſuperſtitious notions which govern a great part of the world. But as he finds me a little unwilling to reſign my immortality, he has furniſhed me with a ſyſtem of tranſmigration, and the eternal wandering of the ſoul from one ſpecies of being to another.

However, I do not find myſelf a gainer by renouncing my creed, which allowed me to hope, that after the period of this mortal life, I might be an angel, or at leaſt equal to thoſe bright eſſences.

But by this fantaſtic ſcheme, to which my brother is making me a convert, my pretenſions are ſunk: the utmoſt I can expect, when I have ſhifted my preſent exiſtence, is, to grin in a monkey, or look demure in a broad-

broad-fac'd owl, or to ſit a chattering magpye in a buſh. It is a chance among which of the animal race I am to be numbered; whether I ſhall mount the air with the winged inhabitants, or crawl on the earth among my brother reptiles, or graſe in the meadows with the horned tribe. Indeed I have no great ſtomach to graſs or hay, and as little inclination to ſleep in a den, or ſtretch my hairy bulk on the dewy plain: but as it is yet uncertain, whether I am to ſtalk, or fly, or ſwim; I am ſtill at a loſs which of theſe various clans to greet as my next kindred.

However, I am better pleaſed with being what I am, than any thing elſe. I had rather be a celebrated toaſt, fluttering at a ball among beaux and pretty fellows, than the moſt gaudy butterfly hovering with painted wings over a bed of tulips. If this ſhould be my enſuing fate, it will be a mortifying deſcent from a goddeſs to an inſect.

And really there is ſomething ſo gloomy and uncomfortable in theſe proſpects of futurity, that if I conſider them much longer, I ſhall turn Chriſtian again, in defiance of my brother, and a learned unbeliever his companion, who are perpetually ridiculing my concern about a viſionary hereafter, as they term it.

Indeed this would be the leaſt of my cares, were I not extremely at leiſure; but as I am, it is impoſſible for me to avoid being ſolicitous what fate attends me, when I reſign this tranſitory life: for I muſt certainly die; I am mortal beyond contradiction; this truth ſits heavy on my ſoul; there is no flying its evidence, nor does this place afford any amuſement to divert the gloomy reflexion. If I ſhould turn devotee, you would think it a more wonderful metamorphoſis than any I have named. But in all changes I am conſtantly

Your's, &c.

LAURA.

P. S. I have a ſecret to tell you concerning my brother, which you ſhall know in my next letter; for I am as impatient to diſcover it, as you can be to hear it.

LET-

LETTER II.

I Have too much confidence in my dear *Aurelia*, to conceal any thing from her; nor can it be an injury to my brother to truſt you with his character, and know him to be as great a libertine in his practice as his principles.

But in whatever freedoms he has indulged himſelf, I muſt own he has always endeavoured to give me a juſt ſenſe of honour, and the decorum due to my ſex. While he has taken pains to free me from the reſtraints of religion, he has left nothing unſaid on other motives, that might raiſe in me the tendereſt concern for a clear reputation. Which made me the more reſent his ſcandalous conduct, when I found he had a miſtreſs in his houſe, whom he had ſent hither two or three days before we came. I knew not what to do, nor how to behave myſelf in this exigence, till I found ſhe was rather an object of compaſſion than reproach; and that ſhe came hither, not to indulge an infamous amour, but to ſhelter herſelf from want, and the reſentment of her relations.

She told me the ſtory of her misfortunes, as well as the diſtreſs and confuſion ſhe was in would permit; and, aſking me a thouſand pardons, ingenuouſly owned ſhe had engaged my brother to bring me with him, or not to follow her.

I found her education had been ſtrictly modeſt, and that ſhe was unacquainted with the vitious part of the world. She is hardly ſixteen; her name *Charlotte*; the only child of a noted citizen, who was utterly ruined in his affairs by a craſty *Jew*. From the height of credit, the unhappy man found himſelf ſunk into circumſtances of diſgrace and indigence.

This was a melancholy turn to *Charlotte*, juſt in the vanity of youthful expectations, to find herſelf, from the affluence of fortune, ſo ſuddenly reduced to poverty and contempt. My brother (whom ſhe had ſometimes ſeen with her father, but knew nothing of his character) took this unfortunate criſis to tempt her with rich preſents, and fair promiſes, to leave her friends, and retire to ſome private lodgings he had got for her.

In this diſtraction of affairs, her father being under an arreſt, and all his effects ſeized, ſhe was ſurpriſed into a compliance with my brother's propoſal: nor did he give her time to reflect, or conſult any of her relations; who ſoon got intelligence of this diſhonour, and ſent her a ſevere injunction to ſee their faces no more.

This cruel meſſage, with the ſad tidings of her mother's death, that followed, and the full evidence that ſhe was deluded by my brother with feigned promiſes of marriage, had almoſt proved fatal to her life; nor could any argument allay her ſorrow, till her diſtreſſed lover engaged never to aſk any future favour of her, but what the niceſt virtue may grant. On this condition, ſhe conſented to go to his new ſeat in the country; for indeed ſhe has no other refuge. He has kept his promiſe; ſhe lodges in my apartment, and is treated by him with as much decency as if ſhe was his ſiſter.

I never thought ſuch a libertine would turn Platonic: 'tis an unuſual refinement, and, I believe, the firſt gallantry of this kind he ever practiſed. But he has an eſteem, a tenderneſs for her, of which, by his diſſolute manners, I always fancied him uncapable.

Her behaviour is really modeſt; nor was there ever a more natural impreſſion of truth and innocence, than appears in her face. Her too credulous temper and unexperienced years, have betrayed her into this ſtate of ſhame and miſery; of which (though too late) ſhe ſeems exquiſitely ſenſible. Since I began this letter, ſhe came into my cloſet, and, with a flood of tears, begged me to contrive ſome way to free her from this dangerous place.

"But whither (ſhe ſaid) can I fly? My friends will "never receive me; nor have I the confidence to meet "their reproaches. My crime has ſent a tender mo- "ther weeping to her grave; it loads my father's hoa- "ry head with a heavier weight of ſorrow than all his "other misfortunes. Love was not my excuſe; I am "yet a ſtranger to that paſſion: it was a cowardice, "it was fear of poverty, a criminal diſtruſt of celeſtial "providence. I ſhould have begged, I ſhould have "ſtarved, rather than parted with my innocence on ſuch "mercenary terms. However ſincere my repentance is, "it can ſignify nothing with regard to the world. The

"ſcandal

" ſcandal will never be obliterated. I muſt either face " the public contempt, or waſte my days in a joyleſs " obſcurity. Put my condition in the beſt light: would " this falſe man, as he promiſed, marry me; what op- " probrious language, what terms of infamy, muſt I " expect, in his intervals of chagrin! Beſides this, the " impiety of his converſation terrifies me, while I hear " him make a jeſt of thoſe ſacred ſubjects for which I " have been taught the higheſt veneration. I ſhould " live happier with a wild *American*."

I made no reply; the reaſoning was too juſt to admit a contradiction. But this melancholy inſtance makes me more than ever reſolved not to ſurrender, nor even capitulate, on any terms, but thoſe of a lawful *Engliſh* wife. Adieu.

LAURA.

LETTER III.

WHat mutable things we are! You will be ſurpriſed to hear I am grown fond of the country, and have acquired a reliſh for its harmleſs delights. I can talk to an echo, or liſten with great attention to a purling ſtream. I am in a fair way to make garlands, invoke the muſes, and write paſtorals. Since you heard laſt from me, I have met with an agreeable adventure that has given a ſort of romantic turn to my imagination.

As I was taking my conſtant diverſion of riding on the downs, the evening being exceeding pleaſant, I wandered ſome miles beyond my uſual limits, till I came in ſight of a venerable pile of building, which could be diſtinguiſhed from a church, by nothing but the want of a ſteeple; every thing about it had an air of grandeur and antiquity. At ſome diſtance from the houſe there was a thick wood, with ſeveral fine walks cut through it.

I had a great inclination to ramble in thoſe agreeable ſhades; and alighting, ordered my footman to wait at the place where I left him. It was not long before I came to the centre of the foreſt, in which was a large graſs-plat of a circular figure, with a double row of high elms growing in the ſame form round it. In the middle

of the green was a little mount, that, by eaſy ſteps of turf, had a winding aſcent to the top; where ſtood an arbour of jeſſamine, woodbine, and roſes, twiſted together with a ſort of elegant diſorder. The gaudy bloſſoms pleaſed the ſight, while their mingled ſweets perfumed the ambient air. On the lower branches of the circling elms hung ſeveral gilt cages, with a variety of ſinging birds in them, which were now chanting their evening-ſongs, while a muſical flagellet, in clear and ſhrill reſponſes, anſwered from the delicious arbour.

I began to think there were indeed ſuch things as inchanted foreſts and vocal groves, or that the great Spirit of nature was ſolacing itſelf in thoſe innocent abodes. However, female curioſity led me on, till I came to the charming bower; where I found a well-dreſſed beautiful youth, of about ſeventeen, ſitting with a flagellet in his hand. His complexion was a lively brunette, that diſgraced the lily and the roſes; his dark hair fell in large and graceful curls below his neck; nothing could be more elegant than his ſhape and features; nor was there any meeting the ſplendor of his eyes, without being ſenſible of every darting glance.

I made ſome apology for my intruſion; which he anſwered with an eaſy natural civility. Nor could I perceive that my preſence gave him the leaſt ſurpriſe or confuſion. He received me with perfect compoſure, nor ſeemed to have any manner of curioſity to know whence I came, or whither I was going; nor (to my great mortification) did he ſo much as aſk whether I was a mortal or a goddeſs.

It gave me ſome uneaſineſs, I confeſs, to find myſelf no more an object of ſurpriſe, to one who perhaps had never ſeen any thing ſo fine in his life: for I was in a very rich habit, blazing with ſcarlet and gold. You cannot imagine how it humbled my vanity, to obſerve with what indolence and tranquillity, the young inſenſible looked at me; and the more, becauſe he did not ſeem to want wit or politeneſs. I was extremely vexed, that at three and twenty he ſhould treat me with as much indifference and reſpect, as if I had been his great-grandmother.

This ſedateneſs gave me a curioſity to pry into his ſtudies;

ſtudies; for I ſaw two books lie near the place where he ſat. When I opened them, I found one was, *A diſcourſe of the government of the paſſions*; the other, *A treatiſe of the immortality of the ſoul.* I had nothing to ſay on thoſe grave ſubjects; but, after ſome formal diſcourſe of the fine ſituation of the place, I took my leave of it; the young philoſopher attending me to the limits of the wood, where I left my ſervant; and there we parted, without any ſeeming reluctance on either ſide.

But I own I had a reſtleſs curioſity to know the hiſtory of this lovely youth, and to whom the houſe belonged. Nor was it long before I received ſatisfaction from a clergyman that was riding the ſame road with me. He ſaid, "The manſion was Sir *Harry Lizzard*'s, a man of "merit, and well acquainted with the world; at which "he was now unreaſonably diſguſted, and grown ſolitary, on the account of the death of his eldeſt ſon, to "whom he had given a very liberal education, and with "a generous allowance ſent him into *Italy*; where his "time was ſpent in the moſt diſſolute manner; till being unhappily engaged with a lewd woman, in a fit of "jealouſy he ſhot himſelf through the head. This tragical event made Sir *Harry* reſolve to give his younger "ſon a quite different education. Indeed his character "is entirely the reverſe of his elder brother's; he is "remarkable for his early piety, and great proficiency "in all ſorts of learning, having a very polite and ingenious perſon for his tutor. But *Philocles*, that is "the younger gentleman's name, has too great an allay "of gravity for his yearly years, and is of ſo retired a "temper, that he is known by the title of *The handſome "hermit*, as he is indeed very handſome."

Here the clergyman left me, overjoyed with this intelligence. As ſoon as I got home, I related my adventure to *Charlotte*; who gave me but little attention, being, as I told you, in the utmoſt anxiety at the manner of life to which ſhe was confined. I am,

Dear AURELIA,

Moſt ſincerely your's, &c.

LAURA.

LETTER IV.

SInce you received my laſt letter, I have taken another ramble in Sir *Harry Lizzard*'s foreſt. My brother knows nothing of this adventure. And the firſt afternoon that I found him engaged, I perſuaded *Charlotte* to go with me; who was glad of any pretence to fly from her own gallant, though ſhe expreſſed but little curioſity to ſee mine.

At the entrance of the grove, we left the ſervants to wait with our horſes till we returned. In my firſt viſit, I perceived, by *Philocles*'s diſcourſe, that when the evening was fair, he conſtantly ſpent it in the charming bower; where we now found him reading Dr YOUNG's *True eſtimate of human life*, with ſuch attention, he did not immediately ſee us, and ſeemed ſurpriſed at the encounter.

It diverted me, to find his philoſophy diſcompoſed. I began to flatter myſelf, it was the effect of my charms. The hopes of ſuch a conqueſt delighted me more than all my paſt victories. It gave a ſudden vivacity to my thoughts; and reſolving by my wit to ſecure the conqueſt of my eyes, I began, with great gaiety, to rally him on his recluſe manner of life, and loſing his gayeſt hours in a joyleſs ſolitude.

By this time the young Stoick had aſſumed his natural ſuperiority; and inſtead of replying, as I expected, in a gallant and modiſh ſtrain, he talked to me of the ſatisfactions of virtue, the tranquillity of the mind in the rectitude of its paſſions; themes which, from another perſon, would have compoſed me better than a doſe of *Laudanum*. But here,

——The grave rebuke,
Severe in youthful beauty, added grace
Invincible——

Like the fallen angel in *Milton*,

——Abaſh'd I ſtood,
And felt how awful goodneſs is, and ſaw
Virtue how lovely in her native ſhape!

The

The glory that darted from his eyes, the agreeable accent, the moving eloquence that flowed from thoſe roſy lips, commanded my whole attention. Had he preached a ſermon, I could patiently have liſtened to the blooming orator,

———————*From morn to noon,*
From noon to dewy eve, a ſummer's day.

Milton.

And yet I could not forbear ſometimes laughing at his gravity, and begging he would put himſelf into holy orders. But he was not to be rallied out of his ſobriety. Nor could I poſſibly draw from him that flattery, with which till now I had been addreſſed. He ſeemed rather to have an inclination to humble my vanity.

Charlotte, the whole time, ſat in a penſive ſilence, while the tears, which ſhe ſtrove to conceal, would ſometimes drop from her eyes. *Philocles*, in every pauſe of converſation, ſurveyed her with looks that expreſſed great humanity: but I was in no diſpoſition to be jealous of any thing I looked on ſo inferior to myſelf.

However, my concern to conceal this affair from my brother, made me break off the converſation a little abruptly, that we might be at home at the uſual hour. As ſoon as ever we were got alone, I aſked *Charlotte* how ſhe liked the *handſome hermit*. "Oh (ſaid ſhe, "with a tender emotion) that I had never ſeen him! "Till now I was not ſenſible of the injury this barba- "rian (your brother) has done me. He has cut me off "from all the lawful joys of life, from the pleaſure of a "reciprocal affection for a man of worth and virtue. "With my innocence I loſt a right to that happineſs. "What! am I a proſtitute! a kept miſtreſs! your "brother's—! O infamy! your brother's wh—e!"

"If you had not been that, (ſaid I), *Charlotte*, you "had been a beggar."

"O envied title! (ſhe replied); O glorious Poverty! "thou haſt been the choice of ſaints and heroes; vir- "tue has made thee her ſanctuary, her peaceful retreat. "I could have fed on wholſome vegetables, quenched

"my

" my thirſt at ſome cryſtal brook, indulged my harmleſs " ſlumbers on the verdant turf, undiſturbed with guilty " fears. Pardon me (ſaid ſhe, recollecting herſelf) " theſe paſſionate ſallies. I find myſelf more than ever " undone, condemned to waſte my hours in ſullen ob- " ſcurity; in the pride of life, the bloom of ſoft de- " ſires, to languiſh in ſolitary deſpair! My conſcience " will not ſuffer me to gratify an unlawful paſſion; nor " ſhould any advantage (were my guilt a ſecret) per- " ſuade me to impoſe on a man of worth. I have been " true even to this rake that has undone me, and fru- " ſtrated all my hopes of a lawful happineſs."

" That is, my brother has ſpoiled your marriage " (ſaid I). But, dear *Charlotte*, why ſhould that " thought afflict you, who intend to paſs your future " time in penitence and retirement? Has the *handſome* " *hermit* altered your pious reſolutions?"

" No, (ſhe replied); he has rather confirmed them. " Never had the cauſe of virtue a more reſiſtleſs advo- " cate. Methinks I ſee the beauty that lightened in his " face; I hear the charming accent ſtill; I felt the ener- " gy of his arguments; my ſoul gave its full aſſent to " the celeſtial dictates. I wondered you could ſo often " interrupt the graceful orator with your ill-timed raille- " ry. I could have liſtened to his lecture of morality " till the midnight-dews had fallen, till the ſtars had " ſet."

" Dear *Charlotte*, (ſaid I), forgive this interruption; " I find you are in love. My intention is entirely fru- " ſtrated, of having your picture drawn as the Fair Pe- " nitent, with a lamp and prayer-book before you. I " perceive you deſign yet to converſe among ſinful mor- " tals. Will you go with me to-morrow, to hear an- " other lecture from the charming divine?"

" Rather (ſhe replied) let me retire to the ſilent " grave, to conceal my infamy. I would not deceive " him with an air of innocence, while I am conſcious " of my own diſhonour. I know myſelf; this is the " criſis of my miſery; nothing can obliterate this ſe- " cret ſenſe of ſhame. I may retire from the public " view, as it is my full reſolution. But what is a re- " ſolution at ſixteen? Without peculiar aſſiſtance from

" Heaven,

" Heaven, I ſhall never conquer the dictates of love " and nature. In this perplexity I muſt either marry " ſome worthleſs wretch that knows my infamy, or " deceive ſome man of merit to whom it is a ſecret."

Here ſhe burſt into a flood of tears, intreating me to write to an uncle ſhe had, to receive her into his favour, and let her live privately in his family. This I promiſed; nor deſpair of prevailing. My concern for her makes me forget it is time to ſubſcribe myſelf

Your humble ſervant,

LAURA.

LETTER V.

CHarlotte, to her great ſatisfaction, has this morning left us, and is gone to her uncle; who was eaſily perſuaded to receive her, after he was aſſured of the ſincerity of her penitence. But I found it a harder taſk to prevail with my brother to reſign the idol of his affections; though he loſt nothing by her abſence, but the pleaſure of gazing on her.

I am in pain till you know the ſequel of my adventure with *Philocles*; who, ſince I writ laſt, has ſeveral times, by appointment, met me in the delicious bower: but ſtill, to my great vexation, he appeared inſenſible of any tender impreſſion. I could diſcern nothing in his converſation, but a pious deſign to convert me to Chriſtianity, and convince me of the folly of the new ſcheme to which my brother had made me a proſelyte.

But the laſt time we met, I obſerved a ſoft confuſion in his looks, till, after a long pauſe, (which I had no mind to interrupt), " I am going (ſaid he) to ſet myſelf " in a very ridiculous light to one of your character: " but I am content to paſs for an enthuſiaſt, till the e- " vent convinces you of the truth of what I ſhall relate.

" If a domeſtic tradition may be credited, there has " no perſon died out of our family, but what has had " a warning of their approaching fate, by hearing mu- " ſic paſſing through the houſe in the dead ſilence of " the night; which is heard by none but the perſon

" concerned.

" concerned. My mother and ſiſter both foretold their " own death from this preſage. I ſee you ſmile, (con- " tinued *Philocles)*; but I have had the ſame warning, " and am ſuperſtitious enough to credit it. Laſt night " ſome trifling diſorder kept me waking; my thoughts, " however, were placid and ſerene: ſome verſes I " had heard my ſiſter repeat in her laſt ſickneſs, came " freſh into my memory.

" *While night in ſolemn triumph reigns,*
" *Aſcend, my ſoul, the heav'nly plains;*
" *Thy flight to thoſe gay regions take:*
" *Angels and God are ſtill awake.*
" *The ſmiling ſtars will light thy way*
" *To the gladſome realms of day.*
" *While drowſy men with idle themes,*
" *Fantaſtic joys, and airy dreams,*
" *Are entertain'd; do thou converſe*
" *With heav'n, and heav'nly ſtrains rehearſe;*
" *Viſit the peaceful climes above,*
" *And through the fields of pleaſure rove;*
" *Forget the ſcenes of care and ſtrife,*
" *And walk among the trees of life;*
" *Taſte the rich fruits of paradiſe,*
" *And bathe in flowing ſtreams of bliſs:*
" *Solac'd in thoſe eternal ſprings,*
" *Loſe every thought of mortal things.*

" Juſt as I had repeated theſe verſes, I was ſerenaded " by an inviſible muſician, with the ſweeteſt ſtrains that " ever delighted mortal ears. The harmonious echo " ſeemed to paſs from room to room till it came into my " chamber; where, after a ſhort ſpace, it ſunk away in " a gentle cadence.

" I knew my obſequies were now ſung, and heard " the fatal ſummons without ſurpriſe. Death was a " theme familiar to my thoughts, as I neither expected " or deſired to reach the decline of life."

I liſtened to this ſtory as to a fairy tale, or a ſort of waking dream. As gravely as he told it, I could not forbear laughing.

" This, Madam, (ſaid he), is what I expected; but " it will not make me leſs ſerious on a ſubject of ſuch

" importance.

" importance. You have often rallied me on a manner " of life ſo unſuitable to my years. Perhaps it may " be more the effect of reaſon than inclination. My " brother's tragical end convinced me of the fatal ef- " fects of love, and made me reſolve never to admit " that diſtracting paſſion to my breaſt. But whatever " oppoſition I have made, my heart has not been inſen- " ſible of your charms, nor with all my philoſophy ſuf- " ficiently guarded againſt the allurements of love and " ſoft deſire. Even now, when I find myſelf diſenga- " ged from every other care, I have the utmoſt ſolici- " tude for your happineſs. I am diſtreſſed to leave you " in this ſtate of infidelity; for this is the laſt interview " we ſhall have, unleſs I am permitted to make you a " viſit from the immortal regions, in order to convince " you, that the hopes of Chriſtianity are no deluſion."

" This propoſal (ſaid I) charms me. There would " be no reſiſting ſuch evidence. I hope you will prove " a ghoſt of honour, and not fail the aſſignation; " which on my ſide ſhall be punctually kept, on condi- " tion you appear in open day-light, and dreſſed in " your celeſtial finery. With theſe circumſtances I may " venture to promiſe you, neither to run away, nor fall " into fits. The place of your reception (though not " perhaps ſuitable to your future dignity) ſhall be a " painted alcove, fronting a walk ſhaded with limes at " the end of my brother's garden."

" The gaiety (replied *Philocles)* with which you treat " this ſubject, perſuades me you have courage enough " to be as good as your word; which is the laſt and " only favour I have to aſk. I muſt now bid you fare- " wel, and, in the retirement of my cloſet, prepare to " make my exit with a fortitude becoming thoſe ſacred " principles to which I have adhered."

Here, with a tender confuſion in his looks, he abruptly left the place, and gave me leiſure to reflect on the odd converſation that had paſſed. But as viſionary as ſome part of it appears, I would fain believe the ſoft confeſſion he made is no fiction; for I find myſelf exceſſively in love. But this ſhall be a ſecret to the young enthuſiaſt, till he has got over this ſplenetic fit; which, as whimſical as it appears, gives me a ſecret uneaſineſs.

He

He has certainly infected me with ſome religious panics. I have loſt my taſte for every kind of diverſion. Company is moleſting, and ſolitude tireſome. Self-reflexion diſtracts me. Whether I look forward or backward, the proſpect is all confuſion. But I ſhall expoſe myſelf, by owning theſe weakneſſes to one of your character. Adieu, *&c.*

LAURA.

LETTER VI.

OH, my *Aurelia!* I have ſurpriſing things to tell you! The lovely *Philocles* is dead. His preſages were too certain. About a week after our laſt interview, I heard the melancholy tidings, that Sir *Harry Lizzard* had loſt his only ſon by a ſudden death. The charming youth was impatient of mortality, and is gone to converſe with his kindred angels.

You will wonder to hear me treat thoſe ſubjects ſeriouſly which I have till now ridiculed. It is a change that I myſelf can hardly credit. I never imagined my inclinations were ſo tenderly engaged, nor that any kind of adverſity could have made ſuch an alteration on my temper.

After the firſt emotions of grief were over, I recollected the appointment we had made; but rather wiſhed than believed ſuch an interview poſſible. However, my mind was prepared for conviction. I began to reaſon with *Cato,*

———If there's a Pow'r above,
He muſt delight in virtue;
And that which he delights in, muſt be happy.

I found myſelf now intereſted in the truths of Chriſtianity. The firm belief of a life everlaſting would in this exigence have been my greateſt conſolation. My hopes and fears prevailed by intervals, and kept me in the moſt tormenting ſuſpenſe, while I waited for the deciſive hour, As ſoon as it came, without any conſternation, I attended at the appointed place.

It was a charming retreat, where art and luxurious nature diſplayed their various beauties. The evening was

was ſtill; the ſun in golden ſplendor deſcending to the weſtern ſkies, glittered through the trees. Every thing looked gay; new life and beauty appeared on all the vernal proſpect; the plants put on a freſher green, the flowers diſplayed a brighter hue, and diffuſed ambroſial fragrancy. Nature ſeemed animated with a conſcious joy, as gladdened at the approach of ſome heavenly power.

An unuſual alacrity inſpired my thoughts, and ſoothed my ſoul with a ſecret delight; while a ſoft melodious ſound, riſing by juſt degrees, filled the region round with tranſporting harmony.

In the height of theſe agreeable agitations, as the roſy morning breaks from a cloud, the charming *Philocles* ſtood apparent before me. There was ſomething in his aſpect ſo ſerene and beneficent, ſuch a ſweetneſs and affability, that baniſhed every thought of fear, and filled my breaſt with divine tranquillity. Ineffable pleaſure ſparkled in his eyes; youth in eternal triumph ſat on his brow, and painted his face with a roſy bloom. His temples were circled with a wreath of celeſtial roſes, which were mingled among his flowing hair with a ſort of ornamental negligence.

After a ſhort pauſe, he began with a voice that would have allayed the anguiſh of death, and charmed the wildeſt diſcord into calm attention; every accent breathed celeſtial love and harmony, while he deſcribed the bowers of bliſs, the ſoft receſſes and manſions of immortal pleaſure.

But it is impoſſible for me to paint the beautiful ideas, or imitate the emphaſis of his language. The powers of eloquence ſat on his tongue, and commanded all the motions of my ſoul, which at that bleſsful period ſeemed enlarged in its ſuperior faculties; every word was penetrating and ſignificant, his manner perfectly graceful and tranſporting; in his deſcriptions I ſaw the glories, I felt the joys of immortality. But in the midſt of my attention to the ſparkling orator, I could not help obſerving, that he often caſt his eye on the ſhadow of a dial, which was placed on the top of a little marble pedeſtal, on which, with a becoming geſture, he leaned with his right hand. I fancied his time was limited; for at the

laſt glance I ſaw him caſt on the dial, he vaniſhed, and with him all my joys.

This momentary view of celeſtial beauty has obſcured all earthly glory. Never will the ſun diſcloſe a ſcene of pleaſure to my ſight; the vanities which lately amuſed me, have loſt their charms; my thoughts are fixed on ſuperior objects; a divine and immortal ardor inſpires my ſoul, and determines all its motions. With the evidence I now have of a future exiſtence, my notions of happineſs are refined and enlarged, my hopes bright and unlimited.

Adieu, my dear *Aurelia!* I am not without hopes, that this relation will have the ſame effect on your practice, as the heavenly viſion has on that of,

MADAM,

Your moſt humble ſervant,

LAURA.

AMORET to CORISCA.

FRom the black regions, from the mournful plains,
Where horror in eternal triumph reigns;
From the low caves of hell, the dens of night,
Far from the frontiers of celeſtial light;
This from the wretched *Amoret* receive,
And at my coſt theſe dreadful truths believe:
That 'tis no fiction pious men adore,
But there's indeed a juſt almighty Pow'r;
That human ſpirits after death ſurvive,
And to interminable ages live;
That fields of light, and bleſs'd ethereal plains,
Are no conceits of viſionary brains:
But there are happy bow'rs, and ſhades of love,
With pure exhauſtleſs ſprings of joy above;
Immortal crowns the virtuous to reward,
And glorious triumphs for the juſt prepar'd.
Nor queſtion the ſurpriſing truths I tell,
While I the ſecrets of the deep reveal:

For

For hell is no enthuſiaſtic dream,
No ſtateſman's trick, nor poet's fab'lous theme;
No pious fraud, or mercenary lie
Of ſubtil prieſts, to gain the conſcience by.
'Tis all too ſadly true which they maintain,
And far beyond whate'er the poets feign,
Of ſtreams of liquid fire, and burning lakes,
Infernal gibbets, and eternal racks,
Gorgons, chimeras, furies, and their ſnakes.
No mortal can a juſt conception frame,
Nor find for half the terrors here a name.
Then ſhun the flow'ry paths that downward tend;
To hell they lead, and in damnation end.
Fly from the ſnares of that inchanting ſin,
Whoſe fatal joys have my perdition been.
Like thee, with all the pride of beauty gay,
In looſe delights, I lately ſpent the day;
Like thee accompliſh'd, and like thee admir'd,
My eyes the ſavage and polite inſpir'd.
Whene'er I ſpoke, my wit new conqueſt won;
Thouſands come here, by my ſoft airs undone.
With wild ſurpriſe my alter'd looks they view,
And with loud curſes ſtill my flight purſue.
For learn, before too late, licentious fair,
Each face does here an equal horror wear,
And undiſtinguiſh'd youth and age appear.
Depriv'd of ev'ry charm, and ev'ry grace,
We all deſcend to this deteſted place.
Illuſtrious *Helen*, once the *Grecian* pride,
In folding ſhades her hated form would hide;
And conſcious *Thais* fears to be deſcry'd.
I ſaw them lately by the trembling gleams,
The pale blue light of inauſpicious flames;
No bluſhes paint their cheeks, their wanton eyes
No more with love's contagious darts ſurpriſe.
Raſh *Cleopatra* mourns her haſty doom,
And glides a hideous ſpectre thro' the gloom.
Fam'd *Julia* thro' the croud's no longer known;
Ev'n *Ovid*'s eyes her blaſted charms diſown.
Curs'd be the arts that did my ſoul betray,
And lead my eaſy virtue firſt aſtray.

'Tis

'Tis paſt——and my repentance comes too late.
But thou may'ſt yet avoid this cruel fate.
Perfidious beauty, quit the roads of vice;
Its ſmooth deſcents to certain death entice.
Like *Dives*, from th' infernal coaſts I ſend,
To warn my careleſs unbelieving friend:
For thou, while yet a lovely guiltleſs maid,
To ſin, by my example, waſt betray'd:
And ſhouldſt thou to theſe mournful regions come,
'Twould vaſtly aggravate my heavy doom.

F I N I S.